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MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

FRANCE AND GERMANY:

A

SERIES OF TRAVELLING SKETCHES

OF

Art and Society.

BY HENRY F. CHORLEY,

AUTHOR OF "CONTI," ETC. ETC.

"Praising all, is praising none."—*Survey.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

JOHN RUTTER CHORLEY,

These Sketches

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS BROTHER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

When I first began to indulge myself with a few holiday weeks in France and Germany, it was as little likely that I should ever publish any thing on the Manners of either country, as it was probable that I should ever take pen in hand to write about Art in the days when I used to leave my bed betimes to hammer out Hook's harpsichord lessons and the "Battle of Prague" on the feeblest of all old-fashioned square piano-fortes. The public will care little for the temptations which have led me to venture an essay then so little contemplated; but I hope I may be permitted, for honesty's sake, to state the amount and nature of the materials from which the following sketches of Music and Manners have been arranged, with a constant reference to English wants and English capabilities.

They are the fruit of six journeys. As I have travelled for the most part alone, a diary, for one sufficiently habituated when at home to pen-work, was only a natural companion. As, moreover, I have never, since the days of Hook and Kotzwara, been able to listen to music without speculating upon the circumstances which gave it peculiarity of form and character, or noticing the place as well as the manner of its execution, — it was, again, not unnatural that a favourite pursuit, indulged in a manner which links it with so many engaging subjects of fancy and observation, should give a predominant colour to my familiar chronicle of Paris, and Berlin, and Dresden. But only one of my journals was kept with the slightest reference to Paternoster Row, or any of its dependencies. My rambles have been strictly holiday ones, in which uncertain health has often prevented me from availing myself of opportunities which I dared not have neglected had I gone forth with the slightest idea of collecting materials for a book. When, however, I agreed to publish a few of my notes, it was the least I could do, by a

journey last autumn undertaken for the purpose, to verify or correct impressions thoughtlessly noted, certain of which, I felt, might have partaken too largely of the whim or the sympathy of the moment to be given forth without after-check or sanction. The few chapters which owe their origin to closet-thought and casual research will be readily distinguished from the transcripts of my own experiences made on the spot. As regards the latter, I have omitted much, as too personal in detail; and I have wrought out, here and there, a thought which was merely indicated in the original: but I have interpolated little or nothing with the aim of "making up a show." It has been my endeavour, besides selecting such passages as should illustrate the present state of theatrical, orchestral, and chamber music abroad, to dwell upon such points as I conceived least familiar to my masters and fellow-students in the art at home. Wherever I have stated results as facts, I have done my best to obtain the warrant of accomplished French and Ger-

man friends, well versed in the subjects discussed.

All these things premised, I cannot but feel some anxiety on seeing my book complete. Slight as it is, it touches directly upon so many master-works of Art, and sideways upon so many graver questions, the approach of which is no holiday undertaking, — that I cannot wholly retreat from hesitation and self-distrust into the consciousness of an honest purpose. If but a few entertain the result of my labours kindly, I shall be content: and, by any amount of correction from those who have thought on the subject I have so much at heart, I shall be more gratified than by the largest measure of undiscriminating praise.

H. F. C.

June 7. 1841.

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MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

FRANCE.

THE GRAND OPERA IN PARIS.

"Les Allemands rêvent, les Italiens chantent, les Français jasent la musique."

preparations of dinner to the pleasures of the evening, an old fashioned beef-steak and a pint of port should prelude one of Shakspeare's plays; the risotto and the macaroni of a genuine Italian *tratteria* introduce the languid voluptuous cavatinas of the Donnizettis and the Bellinis; a modicum of champagne tune the spirits to the gay pitch of the Opera Comique, and an exquisite French dinner (why not at Vefour's?), unspoiled by barbarian English notions, be performed as a reasonable prologue to a first night at L'Académie Royale.

To speak seriously—the mind, if not the body, should be prepared to take its part in all national amusements, with something of the national spirit. Yet, how many Englishmen are there, who, by having cultivated such Catholicism, are capable of pronouncing a judgment upon the Grand Opera of the French? It has been again and again called by our tourists and journal writers, nay, and by our professed critics, a heavy, noisy, splendid, fatiguing amusement,—a pageant without singers, palling upon the eye, and either deafening or lacerating the ear. Your

English neighbour at the table d'hote, looks down upon you, if you talk of "La Muette" or "La Juive," while he expatiates upon the stall secured at the Italian Theatre to hear Grisi's delicious notes, or Tamburini's roulades, for the thousandth time, exactly as they are to be heard in London, but in a much smaller and shabbier *locale.* Your American*, to whom all singers are alike, save on hearsay, is a great *ballet* fancier, and therefore will patronise l'Académie sometimes; but in a delicious confusion as to whether Duprez was or was not a pupil of the elder Vestris, and quite certain that Fanny Elssler's steps are better than Cinti Damoreau's were! Your Italian, again, will shake his handsome head, while he appeals against Meyerbeer

* I was one evening instructed by a Transatlantic neighbour thus casually encountered—and, save for his pretensions to connoisseurship, a most agreeable companion — that there were only second-rate singers at the Italian Opera in Paris. "The best," he continued, "come to us, and belonged to the company which were in Havannah last winter." "And what has become of them?" — "They are all dead, sir," was the answer, "dead of the yellow fever!"

and the *Corale*. — *Valentine* and Mademoiselle Falcon. — The latter's melancholy Story. — True Character of the Music of "Les Huguenots." — Its *Solos* thoroughly French. — Its Choruses. — Sketch of the first — second — third Acts. — The Septuor. — The fourth Act. — "*La Benediction des Poignards*." — The grand Duet. — Respective Limits of Opera and Tragedy. — The closing Scenes. — Conclusion - - Page 167

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First Day.

THE ORATORIO. — THE DINNER:

Early Hours in Brunswick. — Primitive Equipages. — A Retrospect of a Dublin Festival with Paganini. — Contrasts in Costume. — A Word upon Costumes at Home.

Calais, — with a gasconading American, a rude sprightly young *Moustache* from St. Omer's, a Swiss who would sing snatches of all the music he had ever heard most Swiss-*ly* out of tune, and a negro, by way of companions, — no one short of a Hercules could have much spirits or strength left for music. But, on sitting down to dinner — my eyes burning for sleep, and my brain jarred with the ceaseless noises of the last thirty-six hours — I got engaged, Heaven knows how! in a question which has often amused me in calmer moments of day-dreaming; namely, the possibility, or otherwise, of a woman producing a worthy musical composition. The occasion of the debate was the third—at all events the last—performance of Mademoiselle Bertin's "Esmeralda," which was to take place that evening. One of her defenders, at the top of his lungs, was expatiating on her force and originality in instrumentation, and declaring that the orchestra, M. Habeneck, its conductor included, had leagued itself in an ungallant cabal to play out of tune whenever "Esmeralda" was to be given. His antagonist, half

a tone at least shriller, was indignantly replying that all that was good in the score was the work of M. Berlioz ("He had peppered it," were his precise words), and that the orchestra was right to withstand an overweening cabal made by the writers of Le Journal des Débats, with M. Bertin Vaux, Pair de France, chief proprietor and father of the composer, at its head. One might as well have been in Morocco, as unqualified to scold about Mademoiselle Bertin and M. Victor Hugo. What will you have on't? (as Mrs. Quickly's ghost said to Dr. Goldsmith) — Seven o'clock found me in L'Académie.

The first evening in any French theatre is not a thing to be forgotten, unless the visiter be singularly splenetic and slow to move. If he be permitted to enter, there is a comfortable seat for him, to be gained without his exposing himself to the gymnastics of an English pit. Without his being disturbed by the shrieks of an English gallery, he will be struck by an understanding of and sympathy with the stage, on the part of the audience; — by its universal vivacity and cheerfulness, and settled purpose to be amused. It is questionable whether the most indefatigable

croaker could hunt out, in all the theatres, great and small, of Paris, on their fullest holiday evening, one single solitary figure of national growth to match our indigenous stout gentleman dragged from his fireside by his hearty wife and "his girls," and grumbling so often as he feels the cushion hard, or the bench narrow, or the air hot, — "So you call this pleasure, do you? Catch me at a play-house again in a hurry." Nor is there any of that odd confusion of ideas as to place, person, and performance, so amusingly manifested at such of our theatres as are frequented for Fashion's sake. We are growing more enlightened, it is true: but I have heard a comfortable gentleman, after staring through an act and nine-tenths of "La Gazza Ladra," say to his better half, who sat at his side with half a pint of lavender-water in her lap, "My love, what is the piece?" Every one in Paris, on the contrary, seems to know the whole history, private and public, of his evening's amusement, — has his own friend in the orchestra;—the gentleman with the peculiarly black beard, who is *oboe primo*, I think, at the Opéra Comique, has many friends. Every one has his own favourite in the

ballet, — can prophesy costumes, decorations, and *coups de théâtre ;* or, if not so well instructed, will be seen putting himself *au courant de soir* by devouring the contents of the ephemeral sheets which fly about the theatre; — while the hasty cries of "*V'la la programme !*" "*V'la l'Entr'acte !*" "*V'la la Pièce !*" "*Analyse !*" "*Vertvert !*" of the vendors, here, there, and everywhere, add their part to the cheerful bustle, and stimulate the stranger's expectation. On this my first visit, being late and inexperienced, I fell by chance into a place vacated for me, in the centre of the pit, and, what was less to the purpose, fell into the midst of a host of *claqueurs*, who, to judge from their grimy blackness, might be devils belonging to M. Bertin's Journal.

Under such circumstances of distraction it must have required cleverer music than Mademoiselle Bertin's to have graven a deep impression on my memory. But I have since learned more concerning her enterprises, which are remarkable enough, on the part of a woman, to merit attention. In instrumental virtuosi of the gentler sex Paris has been always rich.

The name of Madame de Montgeroult, as a professor of the piano, and whose method still lingers among the older text-books of the Conservatoire, is not to be forgetten. Neither should that of Madame Bigot, since, independently of her modest skill as a composer, her genius led her in advance of her townsmen, and made her foremost to introduce Beethoven's music to the French, when the latter had not begun even to affect German sympathies. Madame Farrenc is of our own time, who also devotes herself to classical chamber-composition, and writes pianoforte quintetts, which are worthy, according to the critics, of honourable mention. Nor has vocal music been without its priestesses of note and ambition. A hundred and fifty years ago, Madame Laguerre * had made herself so

* This virtuosa must not be confounded with Mademoiselle Laguerre the singer, who flourished at a much later period ; and who, for her gross tastes and disgraceful habits, could only be called a *chanteuse*, not a *cantatrice* of L'Académie Royale, if the old French distinction were kept up, which made the first word a reproach, and the second a title of honour. On the second representation of Piccini's "Iphigenie en Tauride," the state of intoxication in which she appeared on the stage seriously

eminent in her maiden days by her improvisations on the organ and harpsichord, as to have attracted the favour of the brilliant Madame de Montespan, with whom she continued as chamber-musician for three years; subsequently producing a great work of her own composition "Cephalus and Procris," at the Grand Opera, and in 1721 a "Te Deum," which was executed in the chapel of the Louvre, on the occasion of the recovery of the then King. Nearer to our own remembrance we had Madame Gail, who sung as gracefully as she composed, and whose "Les Deux Jaloux" had such success at the Théâtre Feydeau in 1815, that Boieldieu did not hesitate to associate himself with her in another opera, "Angela." Later still, at the same time that Mademoiselle Bertin was trying to carry the theatre of the Rue Lepelletier by storm, Mademoiselle Loisa Puget was enjoying an easier triumph at the Opera Comique by her pretty one-act operetta, "Le Mauvais Œil"

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endangered the opera. She was profusely hissed, and placarded by the witty Sophie Arnould with the name of "Iphigenie en Champagne." She died in 1783, in her twenty-eighth year.

—thanks to Madame Cinti Damoreau's exquisite singing of her brilliant rondo. But all these undertakings are small and trifling when compared with a five-act lyric drama at the present day, for the most exacting stage and the most difficult public in Europe—a drama produced, too, when the gigantic effects of "Les Huguenots" were still in all the freshness of their novelty. Mademoiselle Bertin seems from the first to have shown not only the boldest ambition, but also a tendency towards the dark and mysterious in subject. Before she wrote "Esmeralda," there were already on record against her an operetta, "Le Loup Garou," and an Italian version of "Faust," the latter of course a failure—Mephistopheles and Margaret's lover being alike beyond the powers of music. But a paragraph is extant in the "*Nachgelassene Werke*" of Göthe concerning the score, which is in some sort an immortality; and I was told of a duet between Faust and Margaret in the street — in its beauty little less delicate and seductive than the duet "*Segui o cara*," which fills the same situation in Spohr's opera. Undaunted by failure,

Mademoiselle Bertin chose for her third essay the next intractable subject to the "Faust" which modern genius has produced; for Quasimodo is scarcely more susceptible of musical illustration than the student or his familiar. Nor was Victor Hugo's romance made the fitter for the operatic stage, because Victor Hugo chose himself to dramatise it. The destruction which other librettists work on the most strongly-marked and simple subjects, — witness the operatic treatment of Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor," — he has wrought himself. Skilful as he is in the management of stage effect, he knows not the secret of Opera — how far, in spite of the trammels of the musician, situation may go, and character be drawn. The scene of the first act was laid in "Le Cour des Miracles," the squalid loathsomeness of which was, of necessity, so far mitigated, that its spirit was lost. The main feature of the second act was the scene at the pillory, which recalls to me at the moment of writing a chorus of women, pretty and piquant enough to have been a waif from Mademoiselle Puget's domain. The grand trio (which is

now, it seems, an essential feature in every French opera) was the terrible interview at Falourdel's tavern — the passion of which again was of necessity entirely tamed to suit *les convenances* of representation; while the fourth act — containing an effective bellringer's song for Quasimodo, said to be the contribution of M. Berlioz, which was given with a rude energy by Massol — opened with a dungeon scene for Esmeralda, and closed in the Parvis of Notre Dame. There had been a fifth act, contrived by M. Hugo, so said sarcastic journalists, to take place upon the towers of the cathedral — the *personæ*, Claude Frollo, the Hunchback, and certain owls: but this the management had retrenched as indiscreet, and had substituted the more practicable operatic tableau of the heroine dying on the steps of the cathedral, while the portal unclosing displayed the illuminated perspective beyond, with priests, choristers, censer-bearers, &c. — a faint copy, in short, of the last decoration of "Robert le Diable." Thus the whole story was at once the slightest of the slight — the most melo-dramatic of melodrama. M. Hugo's

words for music were, moreover, not half so tractable as the *élégant* which M. Scribe gives to his partners, though the one is a poet and master of rhythm and lyrical climax, and the other but a manufacturer of long and short lines. Had I even not been very sleepy in the first instance, I must have yawned over music so colourless and pretending — in spite of the luxury of a chorus, the like of which I had never *seen* before, and in spite of the Esmeralda and Phœbus and Claude Frollo of the opera introducing me to Mademoiselle Falcon, and MM. Nourrit and Levasseur.

But weary though I was, and distracted from the stage by the commodious splendours of the house, by the brilliancy of the audience, and by the thousand sounds of Parisian animated life, then all new and amusing to me — the impression made upon me by the orchestra that evening, and deepened by every subsequent visit, will never fade away. There are things for the right appreciation of which no comparison is needed — such as the "*Sono innocente!*" of Pasta in "Otello," or the "*Figlia! ti male-*

generic to all wind-tones (the human voice included) in France, they are still admirable for their certainty, for their freedom from grossness, and for the subdued but not subordinate part they take in the dialogue of the score. When matters are pushed to an extremity, they can speak loudly enough, and still not too loudly. Indeed, the double drums allowed for, — and these, of late, have seemed to my ear less wooden and overweening than formerly, — I think that the charge of noise brought against the French orchestra is a popular fallacy. *

* The *réglement* of L'Académie, given in MM. Choron and Lafage's "Nouveau Manuel Complet de Musique," and on the same authority unalterable, rates the forces of this admirable orchestra at seventy-seven persons, with two *chefs*. This is a much smaller number than is given in Mr. Graham's excellent "Essay on the Theory and Practice of Musical Composition," where the stringed instruments reach that figure, to say nothing of wind-instruments doubled, four harps, and the additional means in the shape of new cornets, *claroni*, and the yet more senseless rout of cymbals, gongs, triangles — what the Germans call Janissary-music in short — by which the newest composers, agonising after fresh combinations, attempt to disguise meagreness of invention.

Powerful it is, but the foundation of stringed instruments is so substantially clear and firm, that the tissue (to speak fancifully) never loses its coherence by the ornaments and embroideries assuming an undue prominence. Then there is an uniform but well-proportioned care in finish, and consent of execution — an understanding with the chorus — an understanding with the singers — a sensitiveness as to every nicest gradation of time, slackened or hastened, never displayed by our most sensitive English

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The *réglement* also enumerates among the regular members of this magnificent establishment three *chefs de chant*, twenty-one artists, thirty male and twenty-four female choristers, nine or more attendants: — for the *ballet*, three *maitres de ballet*, twenty-six artists, thirty figurants, thirty *figurantes*, eleven or more attendants, fifty-two persons in the wardrobe, sixty-one in the department of scenery and decorations. The minuteness with which, every possible contingency is met and provided for by this musical state paper, is a thing to be admired in this country of ours, as containing the secret of the prosperity of the Grand Opera. I had thoughts of giving the document in full; its length, however, deterred me: and I can but earnestly recommend it to all who are interested in the matter.

orchestras, — which carry on the enchantment; it is a machine, in short, in perfect order, and under the guidance of experience and intellect; — for these, as regards French music, are thoroughly personified in M. Habeneck. Nothing can exceed his perfect sway over his forces. Though he directs with his violin bow, I have never seen him use it; and by the exquisite neatness and precision of the least important or most unmanageable instruments (the *piccoli*, for example), as they enter, not *scramble*, into their parts when the composition demands them, it may be seen that his presence is every where — that his method and meaning have pervaded the whole hundred he commands ere they are paraded before the public. I insist the more strongly on rehearsal and conduct having their fullest share in excellencies, which every lover of orchestral performance must relish so exquisitely, from having heard this same perfect band as inexact, as inapprehensive, as the commonest collection of pipes and wires that know just how to keep together — and in music far less complicated, both as to design and

detail, than the fatiguing works it is used to execute. This was on the occasion of Duprez and Pauline Garcia appearing together in the third act of "Otello." That act, to be sure, was part of the monstrous performance of a benefit night; but it was difficult to conceive how the same individuals who execute the immense finales of Rossini, and Meyerbeer, and Halèvy, with such metallic certainty and sharpness of touch, should stumble heavily through a symphony at once so suggestive and so simple as the few dreamlike and melancholy bars which precede the rising of the curtain to disclose the sadness of poor Desdemona.

But I am growing wearisome, as all are apt to do on a favourite subject. How can an orchestra be described in writing? "Esmeralda" was over, and received with such coldness as amounted to a prohibition of its further performance, in spite of my neighbours the *claqueurs;* the brilliant, animated, motley audience poured out of the wide avenues, — to judge from their vivacious and impatient criti-

cisms, of good Owen Feltham's mind, when he declared,

> "I am confirmed in my belief,—
> No woman hath a soul"—

at least as far as musical composition is concerned.

Since that evening I have not heard a whisper or encountered one printed syllable concerning the further progress in music of Mademoiselle Bertin. Her fellow-labourer, however, has not forgotten her, as may be seen by the earnest epistolary confession — I mean the poem "Sagesse," which closes Victor Hugo's last volume of fugitive verses, "Les Rayons et les Ombres."

CHAP. II.

THE DROP-CURTAIN.

The Half-hour before the Spectacle. — The Drop-curtain at L'Académie an historical Picture.—First beginnings of French Opera. — Charles the Ninth's Charter and *Réglement*. — Baïf, a Diplomatist and Poet. — The Poet's Predominance in the early Days of the lyrical Drama; — obliged to yield to Melody in Italy; to Harmony in Germany. — French *Esprit* and Court Favour; in part determining the Character of French Opera. — Louis Quatorze. — The Marquis de Sourdeac. — Lalande. — Lulli. — Molière. — Madame de Lafayette and Madame de Sévigné. — The Opera under Louis Quinze. — Mondonville's "Titan et Aurore."— Voltaire and Rameau. — The "*Clavecin Oculaire*" of Père Castel. — The Opera under Louis Seize. — The Gluck and Piccini Quarrel. — Gluck's Influences and Conformings significant. — The Conseil Municipale in 1793. — Beaupré's Reminiscences of General Henriot and Lainé. — The Consulate. — Napoleon's Interest in Music; his patronage of Lesueur and Spontini. — The Opera under the Restoration. — Characteristics to be derived from these scattered Notices.

THERE is a certain pleasure in seeing a public place gradually filled by its assembly — in

watching vacant benches and gloomy corners, one after the other, painted with forms and colours, which turn out to be human beings. Even at the Coronation, the six hours of expectation which elapsed between the time when the public crowded into Westminster Abbey and the Lady of the day appeared, were assuredly not long ones. If there be any who share this taste with me, I would invite them to take *stalle* or box at L'Académie a quarter of an hour before M. Habeneck makes his appearance; not, however, to watch the bright-looking exquisitely-dressed ladies gliding into the *balcon* — not to catch snatches of the odd, blithe, vehement dialogue which goes on in the *parterre* — nor yet to give themselves up to the perusal of the *Entr'acte* of the evening. That interesting publication I would fain supersede for one night by offering a brief study of the drop-curtain of the Grand Opera.

This is not one of those venerable veils of dingy green baize, the sight of which has awakened such an undefined and thrilling curiosity within many a young playgoer on his

as well as wise in counterpoint. It is the continuance of the close connection between the nobility and *esprit* of France and its musical theatre, that has in some degree coloured the style of the works represented on its stage.

Nearly one hundred years before the gracious dispensation here pictured was granted—nearly fifty before the publication of "*Ein schönes Singtspil von dreyen bösen Weiben*" in Nuremburg, from which the annalists of music date the first stirrings of Opera in Germany — Charles the Ninth of France had lent his royal ear to the "requeste en notre privé conseil, présentée par nos chers et bien amez Jean Antoine de Baïf et Joachim Thibaut de Courville, contenant que depuis trois ans en ça, ils avoyent avec grand étude et labeur assiduel, unanimement travaillé, pour l' avancement du langage Français, à remettre sus tant la façon de la poésie que la mesure et le reglement de la musique anciennement usitée par les Grecs et les Romains, au temps que ces deux nations étaient plus florissantes." In pursuance of these meritorious objects a sort of charter was drawn up

In fact, the original conditions of Opera were in every country as much literary as musical. Verbal rhythm was perfected long before Melody had got much further than the chants of the Church; and the *rondeau*, and the *letrilla*, and the *canzone*, had taken a form in the poet's brain, before his brother artist had found that the tones and harmonies of Nature were susceptible of a new grace and charm by being grouped in settled forms, and repeated in regular order. In the Troubadour's lay the words were to excite the largest share of interest. It was not enough that his subjects were the "audaci impresi" of chivalry: he was required to garnish the song with *concetti* and similes, to indulge in the luxuries of cadence and alliteration; while the musician, as helpless and inexperienced in his craft as a child lisping sentences, was fain to subject himself to his elder and better-taught companion. The episode of Ugolino had been perfected by Dante in his "Divina Commedia;" the combat of Tancred and Clorinda had been thrown into a polished and resonant rhythm by Tasso; long ere it occurred to Galileo to set the first, or Montaverde to apply his newly-made discoveries

advances in the art of Music, and to its general influence upon the form and poetical merit of Opera. The Italians, by the developement of a natural organisation for melody — the Germans, by their instrumental and harmonic discoveries, made, severally, acquisitions too rich and precious to be renounced; the display of which was presently deemed important enough to set aside those statutes of dramatic composition which demand fable, character, dialogue, as well as captivating forms of presentment, or magnificent accessories. It was not altogether so with the French, who are more liberally endowed, as a nation, with keen intelligence than that instinct for The Beautiful which speaks spontaneously in Italian melody — richer in buoyancy of animal spirits than that sedate and spiritual contemplativeness which finds utterance in German harmony. The peculiar nature of their language was rather an excuse than a cause, why vocal science should so long thrive meagrely among them; the dazzling brilliancy of their society, a reason why all those discoveries in Art, which being evolved by me-

his noble wits to work to contrive the machinery for a spectacle, "La Toison d'Or," for which the great Pierre Corneille had composed the story. The master of these revels, again, though a fierce and brutal man to the Colasses and La Maupins whom he had under his authority, was a fine courtier to Le Grand Monarque.* It was as much his wit as his playing that raised Lulli from the *casserolles* of Mademoiselle de Montpensier's kitchen to the head of the four-and-twenty violins of the King. And in what a circle,—and for what a circle of wit and graceful intelligence

* Louis Quatorze was a magnificent patron of other musicians besides Lulli. Baptiste Lalande, the superintendent of his music, enjoyed the royal bounty and confidence in a large degree; and, perhaps, there are few anecdotes more closely illustrative of the "purple and gold" in which that King *par excellence*, clothed even his consolations, than the words addressed by him to Lalande, on the occasion of the latter losing his two daughters, who, after having distinguished themselves by their musical acquirements, died of the small-pox at a very early age. Some days after this sad event their father appeared at court. He dared not approach the King, but the latter called him to him. "You have lost," said he, "two daughters who had great talents: *I have lost Monseigneur.*" Then he added, pointing upwards, "Lalande, we must submit!"

unmanly and irrational raree-show.* Its honourable position in part imposed upon it the forms it took. As a court pageant, magnificent decorations were necessary to it; as an object of interest to the wits of the day, care was to be

* The ridiculous and undistinguishing ecstasies of the great world to which Italian Opera was the victim when first introduced into England, were hardly less fatal to Art than the wholesale contempt lavished upon music by the wits and essayists who ruled opinion between the times of Purcell and Burney,— the elegant scholarship and social popularity of the latter doing much for the redemption of his art in public esteem. The Opera was an unfailing object of hatred and mark of sarcasm for our playwrights. One of the few smart things to be found in Fielding's dull and indecent comedies—the grand burlesque of "Tom Thumb" always excepted — is Gaywit's hit at Mr. Crambo's new opera, "The Humours of Bedlam.'' "I have read it," says Lord Richly, "and it is a most surprising fine performance. It has not one syllable of sense in it from the first page to the last.

"*Mr. G.* — It must certainly take.

"*Lord R.* — Sir, it shall take, if I have interest enough to support it. I hate your dull writers of the late reigns. The design of a play is to make you laugh; and who can laugh at sense?

"*Mr. G.* — I think, my lord, we have improved on the Italians. They wanted only sense: we have neither sense nor music."

The Modern Husband, Act II. Sc. 5.

not only to "cracher des vers" for occasional festivals, but also to elaborate opera books for Rameau *, or to consult that famous composer with most flattering deference concerning the "Clavecin Oculaire" of the Père Castel. †

* Voltaire's musical dramas were "Samson" (in five acts), set to music by Rameau, but owing, its author tells us, to some cabal, never represented; "Tanis et Zelide, ou Les Rois Pasteurs," a tragedy for music (in five acts); "Pandore" (in five acts); "La Temple de la Gloire" (in five acts), a *pièce d'occasion;* "Le Baron d'Otrante" (in three acts); a comic opera; and "Les Deux Tonneaux," a sketch for a comic opera, also in three acts.

† This invention seems to have excited considerable inquiry at the time of its being put forth; and the following passage concerning it, besides its intrinsic curiosity, and illustrating the interest which French literary men have taken in Music, has a pertinence and a value in this place, as a testimony to the fondness of a French musician for philosophic and fanciful speculations. "Father Castel the Jesuit," says Gretry, in his delightful Essais sur la Musique, "invented a harpsichord which displayed colours instead of yielding sounds. Was this composed of many octaves? was black the deepest, and white the highest tone, with the other colours placed in the interval? I am ignorant of the fact. It seems to me, rather, that he ought to represent the body of sound and its component parts by the colours of the prism, or of the rainbow, and then, by combinations of the primitive

for melody unaccompanied by dancing—for the tones and not the words of the singer—who that knows the history of Paris in the last century can have forgotten how largely both the noble patronage and the wit of that brilliant capital arrayed themselves in the Gluck and Piccini quarrel, to defend their stage against its being utterly yielded to the syrenry of the South? Few other chapters in the history of Art record so lavish an expenditure of talent and intrigue. Remark, too, not only the substantial worth of the central subject of the controversy, but the direction taken by his invention. Though the composer of "Iphigenie" was a hundred years beyond Rameau in resource, in poetry of conception, in grace of genius, his triumphs tended to remodel,—not to destroy French opera. His works are more antagonistic to the "Artaserse" of Hasse than to "Les Indes Galantes" of

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to him. Does he not seem to point out to the musician the tones, the sounds, which he ought to employ? All these things are not inevitable, or according to rule; but the truth commands the artist to observe them; and he who labours from inspiration will not depart from them without reason."

ment — a solemn protest against which pretension, with its Sybilline burden, "*The Opera is destroyed*, if it passes out of royal keeping!" is to be seen in the archives of the Hotel de Ville even unto this day. Nay, in the times of confusion and discord that so shortly followed, which brought Marie Antoinette, the patroness of Gluck, to the block, L'Académie, now stripped of its "*Royale*" and called "Le Théatre des Arts," remained still an object of official superintendence. "Nothing could be more grotesque and amusing," says an agreeable writer in La Gazette Musicale, "than to hear Beauprè, a dancer of that epoch, relate in his own graphic way the transactions of the artists with General Henriot; — who, in spite of his avowed protection of Le Théatre des Arts would threaten Laine and the other actors to cut off their heads within four-and-twenty hours, when they did not sing the patriotic hymn in vogue with sufficient earnestness, good-will, and enthusiasm." In the year V of the Republic, the Directory will be found taking more rational measures for the re-organisation of the Opera

less assembly of faded phantoms, and the wits and thinkers had graver interests to take care of than those of the *coulisses;* so that the Opera succumbed under the paralysis that infected all establishments during that stagnant and melancholy epoch.

Is it then remarkable that, with such a past, the lyrical drama of France should reflect the history and opinions of its times? — that the trivialities of gay court-life should have found a representation in the grand ballets which were so long an essential part of every work? — that the severity of a literary parterre in a musical theatre should have demanded coherence and climax in the fable to be represented, and dramatic as well as vocal powers on the part of the actor? Is it to be wondered at, that since the peculiar organisation of the natural man, and the exigences of his language, made the singer the least excellent ingredient in the Opera of France, those also who wrought for it should be led to study combination rather than melody, declamation rather than facility of display? Is it needful to detail, point by point,

CHAP. III.

THE "MYSTERY" OF YOUNG FRANCE — "ROBERT LE DIABLE."

Meyerbeer's Operas essentially typical of Young France. — English Misapprehension. — Mr. Hogarth's Character of "Robert." — "Robert" a Mystery. — Tendency towards Mysticism in modern French Imagination. — The Church and the Opera. — M. Véron's allegorical Scenery. — French Mysticism sensual, not spiritual. — Its Expression in Meyerbeer's Music. — Peculiarity of Style. — Originality orchestral rather than vocal. — Meyerbeer an Elaborator. — Eloquent Defence of Elaboration by George Sand. — *Robert*, a Figure new to French Opera, — His Chivalry, — His Courtesy. — Nourrit the best *Robert*. — Nourrit as a Singer. — The Retirement of Singers. — Nourrit as a Man, — Anecdotes of his last Days. — A Conversation with M. Berlioz — His Suicide. — *Alice*, an original Creation. — The Music of her Part. — *Bertram*. — Mixture of Levity with French Mysticism. — Infernal Ballets. — Rumoured Duel between M. Janin and the Comte Walewski. — The Laffarge Trial. — The Consistency of the whole Tissue. — Levity a Hindrance in Art.

If the premises of my slight prelude be granted, they will amount to a pleading for the publication of thoughts and fancies connected with

"Les Huguenots," which are eligible or effective in a concert-room. Thus, to those who are not familiar with these works in their birthplace there is danger of seeming extravagant, perhaps even unintelligible, in offering some account of them; while those familiar with the music of Paris have already either accepted them as *chefs d'œuvre*, or rejected them as confused and elaborate masses of noise and pageantry. But the attempt must still be made; and if the result be only to quicken curiosity and invite a keener analysis, something is done. They have as yet been too cavalierly treated by the English fraternity of critics. In his agreeable "Memoirs of the Musical Drama," for instance, my good friend Mr. Hogarth passes over the "Robert" in half a dozen lines, giving the drama the praise of considerable "poetical merit, with allowance for the wildness and extravagance of the subject."

Now, under submission, such a "character in little" as this is at once too slight and too scornful. To begin with the "Robert:" that opera has surely a specific interest as the most

my subject. "Depuis quelque temps," says the anonymous writer, "l'opéra entretient, dans ses œuvres lyriques, d'étroites rélations avec l'église. Les derniers ouvrages représentés sur cette scène ont tous emprunté quelque chose, les uns le sujet tout entier, les autres quelques détails importans aux passions et aux cérémonies religieuses."

It may be well that it is easier for the English to sneer at than to sympathise with these imperfect and alloyed and distorted shadowings forth of belief — with these struggles of Art to find some central rallying-point in place of a void: but there is a mind and a meaning in them, nevertheless, which no observer of the progress of opinion in France ought to disdain. And this tendency, if not fully comprehended, was instinctively met by the exquisite managerial tact of M. Véron * while putting the "Mystery"

* On the other hand, so completely did M. Véron regard the production of "Robert" as hazardous, that, after the opera had been kept back for nearly two years, he insisted upon the government giving him an indemnity of 50,000 francs for the obligation he was under to produce the work which M. le Vicomte de Rochefoucauld had bespoken before he entered on the lesseeship of L'Académie

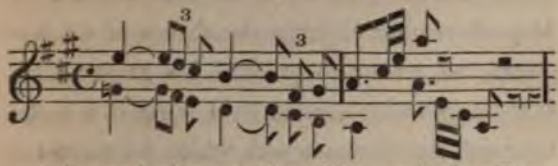
possible. Though the mind is to follow the conflict of Heaven and Hell for a human soul, the gay or appalling melodrama in which the momentous story is conducted, is accompanied by melodies, rhymed, and coloured, and decked out with all the conventional attractions of the sensual school. The *valse* of the demons, but for a few mechanical tricks, might be a dancing measure of Transylvanian miners — the prayers of the pilgrim maiden, by whose agency the dark doom is to be averted, and the fiend cheated of his prey, are intrinsically little graver than the songs of the Rose or Lucette of the old Opéra Comique, whose most momentous cases reached the wreath and *bouquet* she was to wear at the coming *Rosiere.* There is one moment, and one only, it seems to me, where the composer has in his *prima intenzione* reached the spiritual height of his subject, — I mean the point in the last act, where the holy chanting within the cathedral supported by the swelling tones of the organ wrings the heart of the prodigal with a strange trouble, and forces from him the agonised and

so fluently captivating in melody as if it were purely the former, not so severe in its rejection of outward forms of captivation as if it were the latter. In the *rococo* decorations of the best age, there is a like intermixture and a like harmony. The religious cherubs — the chivalric griffins of the Christian North, are interlaced by the acanthus leaves, and the husk garlands, and the volutes of the Pagan South. But a spirit, neither Christian nor Pagan, has passed over these fragments, separately so discordant; and by here shedding a tinge of colour, there throwing off a winding hair line or winging the cherub's head with the acanthus leaf, — has made up a whole which, however corrupt when tried by the standards of the highest Truth and Beauty, has still its own proportions and laws, and fascinates, even while it defies rigorous criticism. If I chose, or it was needed, to urge a sophistry in the cause of the "Robert," I might add that such an union of styles and climates, of North and South, was not only permissible but laudable in a story, the scene of which is laid in Sicily, — a land at once rich in Norman remains and Corinthian columns. But, as Sir Thomas

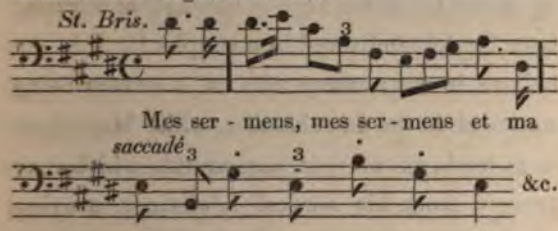
holy innocence of Alice, or the demoniac darkness of Bertram. He contents himself with "pointing the moral" of his phrases by such orchestral touches and combinations as shall have some harmony with the lurid shades of the scene-painter, — with the supernatural flames of the property-man, — with the tournament processions of *le maître de ballet*. It is curious to observe on what utterly commonplace tunes he does not disdain sometimes to lavish all his artifices; witness the quartett of heralds "Sonnez, clairons," in the second act of "Robert;" witness, even, the subject, "Dieu puissant," which is the master-idea of its magnificent final trio. Nothing can be much more thoroughly hackneyed than these. In all places where the scene relies rather upon the thought and the singer than upon the dramatic position, orchestrally expressed, this commonplace reveals itself in a most painful degree: — witness the first duet between Robert and Isabelle, "Avec bonté," now left out, — witness the *stretto* of their duet in the great scene, "Crains ma fureur," where, in spite of a most careful piquancy of instrumentation, and

a certain trick * to give emphasis and an air of novelty, the listener cannot but feel that he is

* The artifice to which I allude is Meyerbeer's propensity to enfeeble the terminations to his phrases, by making the vocal part *echo itself*, or, in other words, fill up the pause, and sing the reply succeeding its natural close, which is usually given to the orchestra. Thus, in the last movement of the duet "Avec bonté," we have the following "lame and impotent conclusion :"—



A thousand other examples of this peculiarity will suggest themselves to every one familiar with Meyerbeer's operas, — the composer having even employed it in that *chef-d'œuvre* of modern dramatic effect, the conspiracy scene in "Les Huguenots :" thus—



It is difficult to conceive on what other principle of expression in composition save the puerile resolution to be original at any price whatsoever, a figure so repulsive,

carried on by his own enthusiasm, and by the gestures of the actors, — not by the musical climax, — towards that point of strong suspense and passion so effectively filled by the well-known burst of entreaty "Robert, toi que j'aime!"

These mannerisms are all more or less the strivings of aspiration unaccompanied by commensurate power. It seems, indeed, as if Meyerbeer must undergo the throes of a long-protracted labour to produce his great works. If the anecdotage current on the subject is to be believed, the slowness with which he creates is only equalled by that of our own poet, of whom it is told, that a friend calling upon him found the street laid with straw, and the knocker tied up in the kid glove, Q—— having that morning been "safely delivered of a couplet!" I do not believe in the nursery tales of a servant being stationed in the antechamber, while Meyerbeer is at work, to prevent any sounds which may proceed from his musical laboratory straying abroad into the streets; but certain it is, that the changes and additions made to the score of

because so redundantly and feebly unnatural, can have been affected.

"Les Huguenots" while it was in rehearsal, were so important and harassing, that, somewhere about the sixtieth trial, the entire *corps* of players and singers rose in mutiny against the master, and demanded that he should cease from his experiments. There is a sedulous resolution in all this to produce a great and permanent work, worthy of all respect; but such watchings, and siftings, and trials, and erasures are not necessary to — I dare almost add not endurable by Genius of the highest order. They must have gone on silently and severely in the mind, where the work of study, and purification, and selection, though unowned and unfelt, no more ceases than the operations of that central fire which, far beneath the surface, perfects metallic riches in the earth and verdure upon it: but the hand ought assuredly not to be thus restrained and vacillating. It was not thus that Handel wrote his oratorios. And who has forgotten the well-known anecdote, how Rossini, that idlest and least artistic of all boon companions, by ten minutes' work with his pen, in half-playful mockery of the poet Tottola, saved the second act of his

"Mose" from damnation by throwing off that magnificent Preghiera?—an anticipation, at least, of the most highly-wrought effects so elaborately calculated and wrought up by the composer of "Robert." *

* I cannot resist risking the utter destruction of my own text by adding in a note a passage stating the other side of the question, from George Sand's eloquent letter to Meyerbeer, upon which I have fallen since transcribing the above page. "Were I even an enlightened *dilettante*," says the writer, "I would not dissect your *chefs-d'œuvre* to try to discover in them some slight blemish which would give me an opportunity of displaying the puerilities of my scientific knowledge. I should not know how to find whether your inspiration was of the head or the heart—a strange distinction signifying absolutely nothing; a reproach eternally brought by criticism against artists, as if the same blood did not throb in the bosom and in the brow; as if, according to the supposition that there are two distinct shrines in men for the reception of the sacred flame, the fire which mounts from the secret heart to the brain, and that which descends from the brain to the secret heart, did not produce in Art and in Poetry precisely the same effects! If any one were to say that you were of a nervously bilious temperament, and that your labour proceeds slowly, with less rapidity, perhaps, but with more perfection than in persons more sanguine and full of life, I should understand what he meant, and think it the simplest thing in the world that you had not all the

But to every man his due; and, while in natural freshness and spontaneity, or in a knowledge of those deepest principles of art which made Gluck immortal, Meyerbeer must be

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temperaments at once: but what matters it if there is a goblet of diamond-clear water on your piano in place of a flask of burning Cyprus wine — if the one enkindle in you that which the other does not enkindle in its possessor? What pedantic frenzy torments these poor literary censors, that they should be for ever employed in mistrusting their sympathies, and asking of themselves whether there is no chance that the Venus of Milo may have been made with the left in place of the right hand? The sight of all the harm which men of talent do themselves in these essays to penetrate the mysteries of the workshop, and to surprise from the artist the secret of his vigils and reveries, is a grievous thing: it is melancholy to see a family of intelligences, without doubt fruitful, impoverish itself, and destroy its own fertility with all its might, under the idea of reaching that which is called clear-sightedness and impartiality."—*Lettres d'un Voyageur.*

It would ill become me, had I weapons keen enough, to enter the lists in defence of my own fantasies: I can only hope that all who read this brilliant and ingenious passage will extend its sympathies a circle beyond their original limit — to the critic as well as to the artist. If there be an inspiration, why not also an appreciation of the head as well as of the heart? — and why may not both be valuable?

owned deficient, he has given to the French stage in "Robert" three figures, as clearly in costume, colour, and demeanour, belonging to the days of Romance, as if they bordered some missal or *Cronique* of the Middle Ages. Robert is the prince of chevaliers from the first to the last note of his part — a prince in his libertinism, yet in not one of his lineaments wearing a family likeness to the libertine king, Don Juan. There is a courtesy, an elegance, a gallantry in all his appearances,—whether when he sings the "Sicilienne" among the gamesters — or when upon being taxed by his tempter with cowardice, he bursts out into that brilliant "*explosion*" (I borrow the French word)

> "Des chevaliers de ma patrie
> L'honneur toujours fut le soutien."

— or when slowly pacing the ruined cloisters of St. Rosalie on his sacrilegious errand, he re-assures himself on seeing the mystic branch, with the hopes of

> ". . . . la puissance et l'immortalité."

Unlike the gorgeous prodigal of Spain — though like him in his boldness — he is a loyal

The full brilliancy of this character has never been thoroughly brought out, save by him who created it (to use the French phrase) — I do not say its full manliness — for the very elegance so highly prized and loudly regretted in poor Adolphe Nourrit by a portion of the Parisian *cognoscenti*, bordered so closely upon a mannered over-grace and over-sweetness, that I never heard that fine singer, and never saw that elegant and careful actor, without feeling that neither his clear and metallic voice—nasal in its falsetto — nor his graceful postures, belonged to the greatest school of art. There was a smile when he threw his head back to sing, or to launch a *mot* at some one behind him — a mincing elongation of his "*Oui*"—s and "*Patrié*"—s and the other sounds, which sung in French are intrinsically offensive, that annoyed my insular eyes and ears, as imparting to grace and sentiment and emphasis a touch of *make-believe*, destructive of their effect. He appears on recollection to have been more conscious of his handsome person, and high voice, and

one hand less was raised than had acknowledged his triumphs the night before. But while the public was listening to him, it was already busily talking of Duprez!

I have often thought that the conditions of decay and change fall upon none so cruelly as on the singer. His powers are more evanescent and short-lived than those of the tragedian or comic actor: an unlucky journey, an open window, or a fit of too sedulous practice, may extinguish them in the very midst of his career. Nor does Fashion show greater mobility any where than in music:—who can be sure that the style which pleased ten years since will suffice to please to-day? I have seen Pasta — now all but an extinct star, though some fifteen years younger than Mars or the Siddons of Germany, Madame Schröder — at the close of a superb performance of Medea, throughout which her voice refused to second her, weeping bitter tears of vexation, as she exclaimed, "Is it not terrible to possess all the energy I ever had, and yet not be able to sing?" I shall never forget an evening passed by the side of an artiste,

the stage his own father, — the son's true progenitor in impatience of rivalry! But how much for French art, how much for French history, had been comprehended within those eleven years! A revolution in Opera, a revolution in the kingdom. The cumbrous splendours of Sacchini and Lesueur and Spontini had been swept from the stage by Auber's sprightly and exciting airs, by Rossini's captivating melodies, and Meyerbeer's magnificent but still vocal combinations, — all requiring far other executive powers on the part of the interpreters than the old *urli Francesi*, which made the lyric drama of Paris so long, though so unjustly, intolerable. The delicious flute-like volubility of Mesdames Cinti and Dorus-Gras, the dignity and passion of the ill-fated Mademoiselle Falcon, were demanded, in place of "the shrill screams of Madame Branchu," which so shocked the fine ears of the Fudge family by the fine series of works produced in rapid succession, — to which Nourrit as principal tenor, and one capable of acting as well as of singing finely, was the most important support. It was

eminently sustained. Nor was Nourrit's share in the revolutions of Paris bounded within the walls of L'Academie Royale. It was he who went from theatre to theatre, after the Three Glorious Days, singing "La Parisienne," in answer to the enthusiasm of the people at their deliverance from the Bourbons.—Where is the singer, or the enthusiasm, now?—It was he who, meeting the movement of national taste in his own art, naturalised the youngest of those great German composers, to whom France was beginning to open her ears, by bringing forward the songs of Schubert. And his interests were not confined to music only, says his panegyrist, to whom I am already indebted; "he might be seen eagerly grappling with every new idea. Le Maistre, George Sand, and De Lamennais in turns took possession of his mind: he passed in one moment from St. Simon to Spinosa, intoxicating himself with philosophy, as if it were wine or opium." M. Berlioz tells us that Nourrit's strong and visionary enthusiasm led him to project schemes of a religious theatrical reform, for the purification and elevation of

felt himself to be. In his art, in himself, he was as entirely and ardently Parisian as Madame de Staël herself, but still — while preferring the kennels of the Rue Lepelletier to the Chiaja of Naples —like Madame de Staël, Parisian of the best quality.

To such a man so placed, organised, moreover, by Nature with the acutest possible sensibilities, the idea of rivalry must have been intolerable torment. He could not be expected to admit, that the very revolution in which he had been bearing a part must lead to developements in Art at which he must stop short, — to requisitions from the public which there was no chance of his satisfying, — that a more graceful and rythmical and melodious school of music must superinduce the necessity of artists who should be more largely and richly singers than he, with all his dramatic care and vocal agility, had been. The fame of Duprez had grown and grown in Italy till the French began to lay hold upon it as a matter of national felicitation. He was to be invited to become glorious in his own country. For Nourrit to enter into competition

"It was the evening of his farewell performance," says M. Berlioz. "Having shut myself up with him in his room during an interlude, with the object of once more endeavouring to combat his resolution, I showed him that all artists were compelled, in the course of their career, to undergo those vicissitudes which *he* was bent on escaping at any price. I unfolded to him the endless catalogue of difficulties and troubles which every one among us is called on, at one time or other, to encounter. I recalled to his recollection the innumerable marks of affection, of esteem, and admiration which the public every day gave him, and of which, at that moment, he had just received so distinguished a proof. Nourrit wept a good deal: presently recovering his voice, and interrupting me, 'Enough, my dear friend,' he said: 'all that you say is perfectly true, generally speaking, but cannot be applied in my case. I was not born for such an existence: entering at an early age on the stage, while my father still occupied one of the first situations at the theatre, I found, thanks to a combination of circumstances, including

dead. Possibly, in his less gloomy moments, he believed that his day was not yet over; that he had still energy to recompose himself anew; that he *would*, in short, have a chest voice in place of his own nasal and brilliant *falsetto di testa*, and learn that honeyed and long-drawn *cantabile* which his countrymen were beginning to prize as an indispensable treasure. Possibly he might fool himself with visions of triumphs to be won in other towns; perhaps even on some far future day in his own Paris. The rest need not be dwelt upon: his lukewarm reception at Naples, where he was no "star," no authority, by a public sufficiently diluted in taste by constant tricklings of the music of Donizetti and Coppola, to have hissed Rossini's *chef-d'œuvre*, the "Guillaume Tell;" — his melancholy struggles to effect that which Time and Nature had rendered impossible, and to reconstruct the register of his voice, as well as his style, — and the last crowning frenzy, in which he terminated his existence, are all well known. All were too naturally consequent upon each other to excite as much wonder as they moved

pity. If the approach of Death could, as poets hold, have given him an insight into the future, he must surely have seen honours and regrets in store for him ample enough to have satisfied even the cravings of his ambition. His melancholy fate has led his countrymen into the lengths of a fond injustice; and I have heard not a few Parisians speak of Duprez in a resentful and disparaging tone, as though *he* had been the cause of the tragical catastrophe. We order matters differently in England: no changes of Time or Fashion are allowed to push our old favourites from their stools.* We will

* While correcting this very page for the press, an illustration of French forbearance towards a retiring artist appears in the journals of the day, too characteristic to be passed over. On Thursday, January the 28th, Mademoiselle Mars played her favourite part of Moliere's Celimene in "Le Misantrope." Having acted with that grace and delicacy and judgment which will never grow old, she was called forward at the end of the comedy, to receive the unmeaning homage of a shower of flowers and garlands. Among the latter — and, as it chanced, the very crown lifted from the boards by the actor who led her forward — was a black and white chaplet of *immortelles*; one of those funeral wreaths which are sold at the gates of all the French cemeteries. The force of insult could hardly

not admit that powers are impaired, or that any one belonging to a newer dynasty of Art can possess greater refinements of intelligence and practical knowledge than those that charmed us twenty years since! But of our amount of regret for dead or utterly vanished artistic greatness, it may be feared that we cannot so justly boast.

This notice of the original Robert — in himself and in his story a type of French art and French ambition — has led me away from the second of the three musical individualities in Meyerbeer's Opera; I mean the gentle Alice, who is as truly the real as Isabelle is the titular heroine of the story. And surely —

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further go; and the actress would have been justified in repeating the reproach of the indignant comedian Baron, when mocked in his old age by merely a laugh from the parterre — "Ingrat public que j'ai formé!" in place of her calm and gentle rejection of so brutal an irony. Yet, when Mademoiselle Mars is really dead to the *Théâtre Français*, there is hardly a journal that will not disparage every rising actress for her sake; and declare, that till a woman be fifty, she may be a puppet, but she can be no *comedienne!* — *Feb.* 12. 1841.

over the sense with a holy reviving charm, like the breath of fresh-blown flowers. The air itself is as simple and quaint almost as if it were a Scottish melody, which in many phrases it closely resembles. Brigitta's dainty romance, "Au refectoire" in the third act of "Le Domino Noir," bears a strong likeness to it; but whereas Auber, by employing the same forms of rhythm, and an arrangement of notes curiously similar, has but produced a delicious effect of coquetry, Meyerbeer has expressed the innocence of the Norman girl who heartens herself up when in a strange land, and with evil influences around her, by thoughts of her own village, and of the wayside crucifix she has so often bedecked. Tears and ominous portents interrupt the song; but she clings fast to it, as if there were a protection and a spell in those home recollections. Even when, at last, the Demon confronts her, and she shrinks from his piercing inquisition and his terrible threats, —and the music rises from the colouring of peasant life to that passion which in moments of severe emergency is identical in all ranks—

prives the Italian opera of so much life and energy.

Of the demon chevalier, Bertram, the third of the group, there would be less to be said, even had I no fear of becoming tiresome in this my expatiation. A Weber only can give to such a snatch of melody as Caspar's drinking song a character as demoniacal in its rough gaiety as belongs to the veriest wearer of horns and tail that ever figured in Callot or Breughel's designs, — but any composer who has harmonic resources at his command can, at pleasure, produce a certain effect which shall be bizarre and supernatural. This, I think, is the sum of what Meyerbeer has done; save, perhaps, in the touch of satanic irony imparted to the phrase which accompanies the words, —

"Mais, Alice, qu'as-tu donc?"

in the scene at the cavern's mouth already mentioned. The whole devilry of the opera is essentially French, and, as such, not susceptible of the darkness of musical colouring which German sincerity would have thrown over it. The

of the "Robert" as distinguished from that of "Der Freischutz," may be owing as much to association as to impression, — to the temper of the companions among whom I have heard it, and the comments which never fail to fly about among the audience, when the sepulchral tones of the three bassoons people the moonlight ruin with ghostly shrouds which are to disclose the dainty limbs of Taglioni, or Fitzjames *premier*, or Noblet!

The second time I saw the "Robert" it received an illustration—at least Fancy would have it so — which will associate itself with the magnificent music of the fifth act as long as I live, and is too much in harmony with the present vein of speculation to be omitted. All Paris was just then busying itself in abusing M. le Comte Walewski's comedy "L'Ecole du Monde" — the fashionables of the Chaussée d'Antin, as a traitorous breach of confidence; a French "pencilling" of themselves and their manners on the stage — the nobles of the Faubourg for the *mauvais ton* of its style and incidents — and the sharp-pointed *confrérie* of

their interest along as towards a whirlpool — I was touched on the shoulder by ——, who *blasé* with the music, had only then returned to his *stalle*. "*Mais, c'est une chose terrible!*" said he, disregarding my obvious impatience of the interruption. "What a shocking thing! There has been a duel about this article in *Les Débats*. Walewski has shot Janin dead: — *A-propos!*" continued he, pointing to the stage, from which, just as he had told of the fate of the journalist, the Evil Spirit vanished as all evil spirits do (from the theatre) — down a trap-door with a strong smell of gunpowder.

The tale was a shocking one, nor the less so, from having been brought just at the moment when the nerves were in their most excited state. There is something in the glare and fever of Paris which makes the idea of death — most of all such a death — peculiarly repugnant and insupportable. The man, the duel, and the music haunted me all the night in an oppressive and inextricable confusion: the mimic catastrophe and the real event seemed to possess a strange unity; and when I woke, for a moment

tears for Malibran's death had been dried by the reflection, that "we had not lost every thing," — that Jack Reeve *had* come back from America! *

* The strange mixture of the trivial and the terrible, the "wild laughter in the throat of Death," the spirit of which so strongly pervades modern French manners, French literature, and French art, surely was never more strongly illustrated than in the trial which followed this rumour.

In reporting the proceedings before the court at Tulle, on the 6th of September, when the suspense of the tragedy, already deep enough, was yet further deepened by a second exhumation of the body of the supposed victim, and the then pending experiments of the medical men to determine the presence or absence of poison, the journals of the day detail the examination of M. Louis Philibert de Chauveron. "This honourable witness, whose long deposition, for more than an hour's time, excited the most open amusement on the part of the jury, of the prosecutor and the defender, and *even of the accused herself*, without his perceiving himself to be the cause of it, and without the respect attached to his character and position in the canton or the serious nature of the trial being able to repress its bursts, declared himself to be a jurisconsult at Agas, township of Voutezac." . . . . While giving his evidence concerning the differences between the dead man and the prisoner who sate at the bar in a dying state, his plainness of manner and double-bass voice are described to have been so

days when *belles esprits* and their favourites fluttered their fans and shrugged their shoulders in saucy disdain at the English barbarisms of the gravedigger in Hamlet, and Juliet's nurse, and Lear's poor fool; — when Voltaire protested against Le Kain for showing blood on his arms in "Semiramide," and Mademoiselle Clairon for desiring to have a scaffold erected in the last scene of "Tancrede." The old *convenances* are gone; the old gods and goddesses of the stage, where are they? — swept into the limbo of lost things, or at best galvanised into a strange unnatural life, by the magical talent of Mademoiselle Rachel. For the "Zaire vous pleurez!" we have the more familiar "Vous me faites horriblement mal, Henri!"* for the Alcidor of Marmontel and the Zadig of Voltaire, the Quasimodo of Victor Hugo; for the "Atys" of Lulli and the "Dardanus" of Rameau, the "Robert le Diable" of Meyerbeer. But the sneer and the stilt of the old classical French comedy and tragedy are not wholly extinct. Romanticism does not of

* See the "Henri Trois" of M. Alexandre Dumas.

CHAP. IV.

THE ART OPERA — "STRADELLA."

Les gants jaunes. — A Peep into their Box at L'Académie. — Success of French Operas in England.— English and French Amateurship. — Breakfast. — Trial of "Stradella." — Bachelor's Apartments. — Sir E. L. Bulwer's "Man of the World." — M. le Prince de la Moskowa. — M. le Prince Belgiojoso. — The Music of "Stradella;" — Cause of its Failure; — Its quasi-Italian Style. — A Word upon Eclecticism. — Paër. — Mayer. —Chélard. —Halévy. —Cabals against "Stradella." — The Organ destroyed. — The Libretto, by M. Emile Deschamps. — Its Class of Subject, favourite. — "Le Luthier de Vienne." — "La Symphonie." — "Benvenuto Cellini." —"L'Ambassadrice." — Other Plays and Fictions of the same Class; — Whether its popularity be good for Art or otherwise.

I HAVE adverted to the close connection between the literature and wit of France and its musical drama; to the direct court influences which also, since the time of Charles the Ninth's proclamation, have had their share in determining its colour. To this day there remain features which distinguish the fashionable amateurship of its patrons from any similar encou-

the first witticism of her dainty feet, or Cerrito to take her first butterfly flutter in air.

A freak of good-natured fortune threw me, on my first visit to Paris, into this dainty enclosure; and, while I remember the courtesy with which the best seat was always pressed upon the shy silent stranger, by those with whom he could have little in common, and whom he has no better means than this of thanking, I cannot forget the intelligent alacrity with which the honours of the music, as well as of the house, were done — the really choice points of Meyerbeer's, and Rossini's, and Auber's grand operas anticipated, as well as this magnificent scene, or that imposing procession, or the other exquisite pair of — ahem! — ankles. In fact, without some such fine intelligence and thorough interest, it would be impossible for the Grand Opera of Paris to maintain its present custom of producing five-act works, each of which suffices for a whole evening's entertainment. The only one of these ever tried in England, the "Robert" of Meyerbeer, was voted tiresome by those who would not take the pains to

out; a blood-stained criminal, fresh broken from the rack, being thrown in by way of compensation for the fine trio, "Pour lui, pour moi, mon père," and the touching "Rachel! quand du Seigneur," M. Halévy's masterpieces in composition.

But, while I insist that it is with the singers and the *spectacle*, rather than the music, that our rich and fashionable playgoers, for the most part, concern themselves, let me not be misunderstood as undervaluing English amateurship in the mass, as compared with French. Our people, by time given and money spent and continuous effort maintained, are proving their zeal and their knowledge to an extent entirely unparalleled by our French neighbours. I need but instance our amateur societies and our provincial festivals. And, small as is our amount of mechanical cultivation, I believe our general knowledge to be at once larger and sounder than theirs, as I may have occasion to illustrate when I speak of the Conservatoire. Nevertheless, the presence of such gifts and graces among the arbiters of Fashion, as are to

Paris — a breakfast given, that M. Niedermayer, then about to produce his "Stradella," might afford some idea of his new work to half a dozen of its protectors. London has nothing so pretty as the scene of this meeting: a suite of bachelor apartments in — no matter what *quartier*. Where we furnish, the French decorate; and the host, like Pope's Timon, "having a taste," the two little rooms themselves contained matter for a chapter, if the minute and graphic writer of "The Old Curiosity Shop" chose to describe them. Luxurious chairs, choice pendules, magnificent old china, flowers, the artificial texture * of which alone was betrayed by their blooming serenely in corners darker

* All the world is familiar with the beauty of French flowers, and a large part of it has read Lady Blessington's anecdote of the Parisian lady, who preferred Nattier's best manufacture to the reality, "because it was much more what a rose ought to be." But I have not seen in any English sketch of Paris any allusion to that most national of all Elysiums — the "Paradis Beaujon," a garden entirely of wire and *batiste*; where the soil, too, was artificial, and artificial manure was placed round the choicer floral specimens, the more entirely to deceive the eye. I know not whether these "dainty devices" are still in existence.

was helped to render the score in duet by the best musician of the party. I may name M. le Prince de la Moskowa, because among his manifold achievements — which one day thrust him into the breach at Constantine, and on another carry him to the top of the most inaccessible mountain of the Pyrenees * — he has, in some degree, forfeited the privilege of privacy, by giving an Operetta, "Le Cent Suisse," to the Opera Comique. So, too, when I say that the graceful romance, "Venise est encore au bal," was sung by the best tenor voice in Europe, I may, without indiscretion, name M. le Prince Belgiojoso, since his beautiful published Italian melodies have made him also known to the public. The rest of the little party sang, some of them very well at sight, — all with an almost artistic interest in their occupation; and as the morning went merrily over, I could not but reflect how long and how closely May Fair might be rummaged, without its offering a gathering in any

* See the spirited and graphic account of his ascent of the Vignemale, published by M. le Prince in "La Revue des deux Mondes" for October, 1838.

remembrances of Pasta, have left mixed and confused traces on my memory, in place of the more clear and simpler outlines graven there by the feebler "Nina" of Paesiello, and the spirited "Gli Orazj" of Cimarosa. It is true that an anticipation of almost every Rossinian peculiarity and effect will be found in the music of Paër, yet there is just the difference between the two which exists between an Otho Venius and a Rubens — between the clever man visited by glimpses of invention, and the audacious genius who founds a school. To speak in general terms, the power and the permanence belonging to nationality are things apart, which cannot be attained by the most skilful counterfeiting. Some one or other, criticizing the recent operas by our clever but imitative young English composers, compared them to pictures, which, owing to their being painted in mixed, not pure colours, are apt to fade and turn black in a very short space of time. May it not be said, that all works of the eclectic school have an inevitable tendency to decline in value in proportion as the true principles and deep

have the instance of M. Chélard in support of this assertion. Never was any man more resolute to be German—German in the harmonies of his "Macbeth" and "Herrmannschlacht" — German in grafting a sociable and hearty good fellowship of manner upon a French ground of politeness and piquant rejoinder. But the fusion has been imperfect: the Frenchman has let out his quadrille tunes and his compliments in wrong times and places; and in spite of a fair measure of original genius, M. Chélard's operas are barely tolerated by the countrymen of his adoption, who nevertheless crowd to hear the barren productions of M. Halévy, which are as pure Paris as the Boulevards, or the *convenances* of classical Tragedy, — for the sake, I verily believe, of their individuality. Thus, also, — to ramble back to my breakfast-party — though I know nothing in "La Juive," or "L'Eclair," so sweetly captivating as parts of the "Stradella," played to us by its composer, and welcomed by the "*bravi!*" of the amateurs who had crowded behind him — "*bravi*," alas! not prophetic — the French composer has a name

and a standing abroad as well as at home; while the German, who wrote Italian music for a French stage, failed utterly, and is now almost as completely forgotten as if he had never composed the "*Lac*," the "*Isolement*," and the "*Automne*" — romances, the grace and delicacy of which have long since placed them on every pianoforte in Paris.

But even had M. Niedermayer's music possessed the charm of special character, familiar or exotic, there were many hindrances in the way of his work succeeding. The path to favour at L'Académie is as thickly sown with pitfalls, and calthrops, and traps for the straightforward, as the footway to the castle of Plessis le Tours described in "Quentin Durward." Highly protected as the composer was, he was most potently caballed against, if all tales be true. On the first night of "Stradella," I have been told that nails were secretly driven into the pipes of the organ which was to produce the chief effect in the great scene in the Basilica.* Many more

* It is almost needless to remind the reader, that Alessandro Stradella's exquisite singing of a sacred

disgraceful tales of a like nature have been circulated; but of the scandal of the world behind the scenes there is no end. Another stumbling block in the way of success, was the *libretto* by MM. Emile Deschamps and Pacini: one out of many proofs how the most graceful lyrist may fail when he condescends to the trammels of musical forms, and how the most beautiful and apparently dramatic story may, by injudicious treatment, be rendered unsuitable for the stage.

This work of Niedermayer's is but one of a large class, in respect of its subject. The anecdote of the singer whose voice and pathos saved his life, — a *replica* of the earlier story of the troubadour Pierre de Castelnau, whose hymn to the Virgin rescued him from the hands of banditti, — has been more than once dramatized for the French stage, having been also thrown into the form of a *vaudeville* for what Mrs. Gore calls "that dirty and amusing

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cantata in St. Giovanni Laterano, entirely softened the hearts of a couple of assassins, hired to murder him by a Venetian nobleman, whose mistress the musician had stolen away. On this anecdote is the opera founded.

sat through. Far prettier and more genial is "L'Ambassadrice," in which Auber's delicious music sets off the adventures of a great lady married from the stage — written *at* the Countess Rossi — and deliciously sung and played by Madame Cinti Damoreau. This predilection, manifested in Opera, is again but one of many concentric rings. There are plays of every class and form belonging to the same family, headed by Count Alfred de Vigny's beautiful but melancholy "Chatterton," a work which might have been written by moonlight. At all the distance from "Chatterton," which divides farce from tragedy, come "Kean," "Miss Kelly" (with *Sir* Hudlow for her hero), "Mist*riss* Siddons," "Farinelli," and a score of works beside. The Artist, in short, is followed into his study, his private history is ferretted out, his grossnesses refined, his freaks harmonised by this indiscriminate charity. So he be but German, Italian, or English, it is sufficient. It is curious that while that graphic representative of the *badauds* and *gamins* of Paris as they are — I mean Paul de Kock — is put to the door by

polite personages, and would-be fine *feuilletonists*, as an inmate only fit for the porter's lodge, or the *grisette's* garret; — porter and *grisette* unmoved by this offence against "their order," join the fashionable and poetical world of playgoers in applauding the sighs and spasms of the veriest monstrosity with a foreign artist's name tacked to him, that is paraded on the stage for the hundredth time, by the most superficial reader of the Biographical Dictionaries of Music and Painting.

To question the expediency of making the Artist the hero of any imaginative work would be ridiculous; when, in France alone, "La Dernière Aldini" and "Les Maîtres Mosaistes" of George Sand (one of the most exquisite tales to be found in any language) belong to the literature of the hour: — and when the picturesque tracings of the lives and actions of such men as Durer, Bach, Pergolesi, give a value to the French magazines, at least, as great as our English periodicals derive from the sayings and doings of the heroes of the blind alley and the stable-yard, now so liberally recorded there.

But it is a question, whether in his artistic character he be not too vaporous and spiritual a personage to be presented in action. It may be asked, whether the spirit of the Wise Man of Weimar's remark, that it is "a waste of time to think about thinking," may not be applied to drama and opera; whether for every actor that is acted, and every musician that is sung, something of that necessary enchantment be not stripped away, which gives real splendour to the tinsel of the stage, and warrants Melody as an utterance of emotion. It is a question, in short, how far a taste for such personations may or may not arise, from an unhealthy curiosity, into every thought and feeling "* in the whole flux and reflux of the mind of genius;" a curiosity, the indulgence of which resembles the short-sighted prodigality of the child, who breaks his trumpet, — in reality from satiety of its sound,—in pretence to know how that sound is generated!

* Coleridge. Review of Maturin's "Bertram."

CHAP. V.

THE NATIONAL OPERA — "GUILLAUME TELL."

Anticipation and Fulfilment. — "Guillaume Tell" out of fashion. — M. Eugene Sue. — Anecdotes of Rossini. — How he served Galli. — Rossini and the Drummer. — "Guillaume Tell" in fashion. — Duprez. — Lady Morgan's Judgment of "Guillaume Tell." — Patriotic Operas, and the "Three Glorious Days." — M. Jouy's *Libretto* deficient. — Rossini's general Conception of his Subject. — The Truth of his Colouring. — "Le Vieux de la Montagne." — Reputed Plagiarisms. — A Word concerning Handel. — Rossini's musical Skill legitimately evidenced in "Guillaume Tell." — Its second Act. — Analysis. — The Hunter's Chorus. — Expectation in Music. — The Duet. — The Trio. — Passage from Shelley's "Hellas." — The Finale. — Passage from George Sand's "Lettres d'un Voyageur." — The *Airs de Ballet*. — The Tyrolienne and Taglioni. —The Steps of Frescati's.

I HAVE had few musical wishes stronger than to hear the "Guillaume Tell" of Rossini in Paris. Cloyed as we Londoners had been with Bellini's honeyed, but intensely languid melodies, — the staple of our operatic fare for two seasons, — I looked forward to the representation of this

chef-d'œuvre, with all the impatience of one eager for a new sensation. It is rather comfortless for the musical amateur to reflect, how completely within the range of possibilities it is, that ten years of opportunity should leave him little that is untried to desire. He will do well to recollect, that it is such a moment of satiety, that a pedantic and immoderate preference for some particular school or period is apt to seize hold of the unwary; who forgets how little chance there is of his retaining any balance of judgment, or wholesome powers of enjoyment, if he once become a mere collector or an antiquarian.

To modify the opening phrase of Crabbe's delightful "Lover's Journey" — "It is the soul that hears." This is more than the whole truth; yet there are times, when circumstances throw a wet blanket over the most resolute enthusiasm; and certain it is that my first fulfilment at L'Académie Royale of so long-cherished an expectation left but a very trifling impression on my mind. The night was damp, and deadly cold; the theatre any thing but full — Nourrit

talk, — was far more disposed, for a wonder, to converse than to listen. The management was blamed for having allowed Madame Cinti Damoreau, the original Matilde of "Guillaume Tell," to make over her services to the Opera Comique: — Mademoiselle Nau, who that night was to fill the part, had not ripened into the pretty singer on a small scale she has since become, and was only seen, not heard. Then came up the never-failing question, which had the more genius, Rossini or Meyerbeer?

"Meyerbeer a genius, indeed!" exclaimed one of the party, eager for the honour of his countryman, "Meyerbeer has cleverness, if you will: but as to genius!..... cleverness enough in managing the press, no doubt. Never did any man work so hard for a success. He paid, you know, half the money for the decorations in the 'Robert.' Nothing is lost upon him; he knows how to conciliate every one: here an embrace, there a smile; there is not a *feuilletonist* to whom he has not given a *déjeûner* or a dinner. You should see him caressing —— or ——! Yes, he has a bait for every body.

Now Rossini cannot restrain himself, whatever were the consequence: joke he must, when the humour seizes him. What did he say but the other day, when somebody was entreating him to give us another opera: 'What need have you of me? Surely you have composers enough in France — Mademoiselle Bertin, and Meyerbeer, and Mademoiselle Puget!'"

"Then I do not despair of Rossini," cried another, "if he said so. He can't bear Meyerbeer. Wherever there is pique there must be rivalry. I would give something to see the two men fairly tried against each other. I would bet ——"

"You had better not," replied the first speaker. "I would advise no one to enter the lists against Rossini, indolent as he is. You remember the trick he played Galli — *the* Galli — when he brought out 'La Gazza' at Milan. The two had quarrelled: it was about Madame ——, a certain *cantatrice*, Rossini's sixtieth love! No matter, he was not to be distanced by a singer. Well, Galli had two or three false notes in his voice which he could touch, but

not rest upon. What does Rossini? writes him a d—— of a recitative — and in the great scene, too, where the deserter Fernando tells his story to Ninetta — with a great word to speak, and an emphasis on every weak note! The first representation came on. *Bref*, Galli broke down, and Rossini carried off the lady! One must sing in tune before one dares quarrel with his *maestro*, it seems. Depend upon it, if he please, Rossini has strength enough in his little finger to throw Meyerbeer over whenever he likes! But he never will;" — and the magnificent-looking *raconteur* shrugged his shoulders with that "*Cosa fare?*" gesticulation which is as incommunicable, after its Italian fashion, as the Irish twist. "All that Rossini cares about now is where to find the best oysters and the best wine. Unless the King or Madame P—— contrive to make him a poor man again, you will get no more operas from Rossini. Don't listen to that woman, Mr. ——; she sings false, with an assurance which is prodigious." The woman was Mademoiselle Flecheux.

"A-propos of 'La Gazza,'" said some one else: "did you hear the story of Rossini and

"'*Diable!* but I cannot think of your taking so much trouble! — you play beautifully I am sure! I had better at once give you a note to Mr. Tilmant.* Pray don't bring it in!'

"But the Professor was not to be got rid of. In the drum came, and Rossini screwed himself up for an infliction. 'I shall have the honour,' said the suitor, 'of playing for you the overture to 'La Gazza Ladra.'

"'Ah!' . . . . and Rossini laughed again. Well, the fellow began without more waiting; and after the tremendous roll which opens the march in the overture, looked up, delighted with the noise he made.

"'*Monsieur*,' said he, 'here are now sixty bars' rest — we will pass them over, and ——.'

"'I beg you will do no such thing,' replied Rossini, gravely. '*Pray count them!*'"

So much for my first introduction to "Guillaume Tell." I find little else in my journal, save

* The conductor of the orchestra at the Italian Opera in Paris.

a brief note on the surpassing beauty of the trio in the second act, during which the fire of anecdote ceased. A twelvemonth later the opera was in favour again — all Paris ran to hear it, as though it had been produced the week before; and *les gants jaunes* were as punctual to the overture, and as diligently humming the melody of *the* duet, and of the Tyrolienne, as if ten years, and a revolution, had not passed since their first appearance; — and as if Strauss, the delight of Vienna, had not just arrived to revive the waning attractions of the Concert Musard!

The theatre was as full as it could hold. The overture had passed, and the brilliant applause which followed it: the rich and melodious introduction had been executed with freshened costumes and scenery — when a *salvo* of welcome, such as we rarely hear in England, greeted the entrance of the new favourite, and explained the change from lukewarmness to eagerness which had sympathetically drawn me into the vortex. The new favourite was Duprez.

Of him, not to digress beyond all rational bounds, I may speak elsewhere — at present, of Rossini's music; because a right appreciation of it is, I think, still to come for the amateurs of England.

One of the pleasantest chapters in Lady Morgan's second work on France — one of our few modern English chapters on French music — contains some plausible speculations on the state of the art in Paris, a sprightly account of a rehearsal of "Guillaume Tell," and a prophecy as to its future fate. The music, she found, though not cold, "grave, solemn, and church-like," — rather calculated for the latitude of France in particular, than of the world in general. Though, as far as concerns London, the prognostication has been fulfilled; and though the opera has been hissed at San Carlos, by audiences that call for a Ricci or a Coppola, eighteen times or more, to applaud them for their last trumpery confection, — yet "Guillaume Tell" has been for the last eleven years one of the most popular opera in the European repertory. It has penetrated wherever

ness — may be left to stronger thinkers and better experienced observers. Let us confine ourselves within narrower limits — to a special consideration of Rossini's master-work. And, first, to speak of the book; — it is vexatious to observe how heavily its inferiority and want of interest, and the peculiar construction of the company for which it was written, weighs upon the popular acceptation of "Guillaume Tell." To be sure, in the undramatic ponderosity of his poem, Rossini is not more unfortunate than Mozart was in his "Flauto Magico," or than Weber in his "Euryanthe;" and the fact that his work, like these, still lives and circulates, is a fair test of its musical merit: — ten years giving a tolerable promise for twenty more. The few situations which the *libretto* contains are cumbrously introduced: the entrance of Gessler's soldiers at the end of the first act, takes place after all the principal characters have withdrawn from the scene; — the conspiracy, at the end of the second, is helped to a dramatic force and climax by the accumulation of supernumeraries, and by the rising sun

four acts, than in operas of the usual brevity,—would have paralysed the genius of any one save a first-rate composer. But it was not so with Rossini: he had been denounced by certain of his bigoted antagonists, as incapable of illustrating any subject intellectually; — as one prodigal of melody by instinct rather than from purpose; and who lavished musical solecisms throughout his scores with the wanton audacity of ignorance. Possibly he may have addressed himself in the "Guillaume Tell" to confound these narrow-minded purists; — but it is more probable, that the peculiar resources of L'Académie suggested to him, unconsciously, the path he must take; for he has never been accused of thinking profoundly upon his art. Be this as it may, "Guillaume Tell" stands almost alone as an example of local and national colour given to a historical subject. The echoes of the hills — those peculiar intervals which give their character to all the Tyrolese melodies,—are to be heard in almost every subject, from the *Ranz des vaches*, so felicitously introduced into the overture, and the yet simpler phrase

fairest forms of Art; and the genius of selection and appropriation becomes well nigh as admirable as the genius of creation. And should any be at all disposed to contest Rossini's merits on this score, let them remember the wholesale literal borrowings of Handel, and declare whether the composer of "Messiah," is to be degraded from his throne, because the pompous commencement of his overtures is a form derived from Lulli — because the pattern of much of his *remplissage* had been set by Corelli; and because the "Pastoral Symphony," — that music where "*one feels the starlight*," as Zelter has poetically said, — is neither more nor less than an ancient measure probably Italian, the theme of which had been printed, note for note, under the title of "Parthenia," in "The Dancing Master," some sixty years before "The Messiah" was thought of!

Scarcely less remarkable than this exquisite propriety of taste with which Rossini has created music of a character in itself unique, (doctors disagreeing as to its being French or German,) is the care and finish bestowed by him

not to be analysed or pressed upon too severely, but assuredly dangerous as models. He who, working on a plan, controls Science to do the bidding of his fancy, must always rank higher than he who accumulates every incongruity, and makes one fragment hide the patched edges of another, — satisfied if the whole passes at a distance. There is nothing of this trick of hand in Rossini: the separate pieces of his opera, however complicated, however long, are conducted skilfully, and by allowable progressions. Let me instance the entire conduct of the second act, recommending it strongly to the student as an example of climax. He will find five distinct gradations in the five musical pieces of which it is composed. The first gives the tone of the scene and the hour — it is a merry hunting

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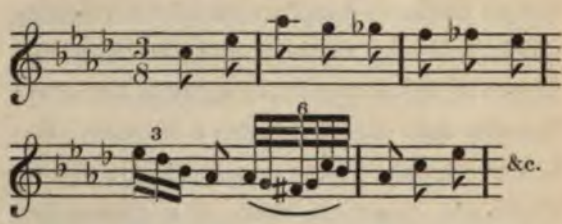
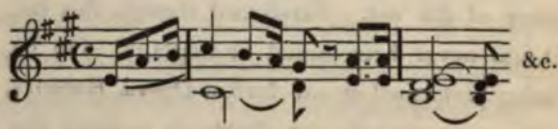
polated again and again, in a movement of similar measure. The songs, "When the trumpet sounds to arms" in "Susanna," and "Hark, hark!" in "Alexander Balus," may be cited as other examples of construction, which in those days may have seemed audaciously, and perhaps even lawlessly, peculiar. None of these devices, however, are to be found in the specimens of Handel's matured and perfected genius.

tilda's recitative and the romance which follow; — from the finely descriptive first symphony to the passionate and yearning close of the air,

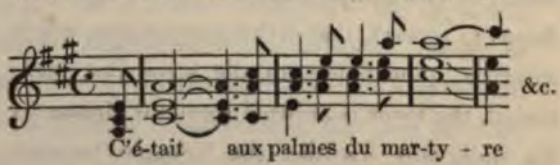


a phrase in itself so thoroughly expressive, that it is next to impossible that a singer should utter it coldly. The calm of the hour — the gentle stir of leaves — the murmur of night airs across the bosom of the lake, are not more strongly expressed in the accompaniment than the tenderness and anxiety of human affection in the vocal part. But Expectation is not to be fruitless. The third change opens to us fulfilment — the passionate dialogue — the rapturous mutual confession — the delicious repose of assured love — the resolution to do and to dare all honourable achievements, that love between Nobility and Lowly Birth may be justified (for she is an Emperor's daughter, and he but a

tailing to him that his own father has become victim to Gessler's tyrannous cruelty; and the desire to avenge his country at length absorbs every softer feeling. I know not whether it has ever occurred to any one beside myself, that in the leading idea, both of the commencement and of the close of this trio, Rossini's inspiration has been unconsciously tinctured by his Parisian residence: — that a distant but indistinct reminiscence of "La Marseillaise" is traceable in the martial and peremptory abruptness of the opening musical phrase,



merging in a grander and more flowing melody, analogous to that of "Marchons! Marchons!" when the composition reaching the point, —



rises to the highest elevation of enthusiasm.

Thermopylæ and Marathon
  Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
The springing Fire. The winged glory
  On Philippi half alighted,
Like an eagle on a promontory.
  Its unwearied wings could fan
  The quenchless ashes of Milan.
  From age to age, from man to man,
 It lived; and lit from land to land
  Florence, Albion, Switzerland.
  Then night fell: and, as from night,
  Reassuming fiery light,
From the West swift Freedom came,
  Against the course of heaven and doom,
A second sun array'd in flame,
  To burn, to kindle, to illume.
From far Atlantis its young beams
Chased the shadows and the dreams.
France, with all her sanguine streams,
  Hid, but quench'd it not: again
  Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
  From utmost Germany to Spain.
As an eagle fed with morning
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
When she sees her eyrie hanging
  In the mountain-cedar's hair,
And her brood expects the clanging
  Of her wings through the wild air,
Sick with famine — Freedom so,
To what of Greece remaineth now,
Returns: her hoary ruins glow,
Like orient mountains lost in day:

Beneath the safety of her wings
Her renovated nurslings play,
And in the naked lightenings
Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes,
Let Freedom leave where'er she flies
A desert or a paradise —
Let the beautiful and brave
Share her glory, or a grave."

The *finale* to the second act—the last of the five gradations mentioned — has yet to be spoken of. It was well done of Rossini, after a strain of so thrilling an excitement as the trio, to allow an interval of comparative repose — the occasion being furnished by the covert approach and gradual entrance of the men of the three Cantons. What invention is here ! — what variety ! How characteristic and distinct is the music of each tribe; yet how naturally and solidly are the three different airs bound together by a few emphatic and significant phrases, till, in confluence, they burst out in the inspiriting triple chorus, "Guillaume, tu le vois !" and afterwards reply to the hero's address, in eager antiphony, which, wrought up to a sublime climax, leads to the solemn dedication of their swords and lives

to the cause of Freedom! Here, the situation is far more the work of the musician than of the poet; so intensely picturesque and appropriate is the chain of movements by which the close is brought on. At first we have snatches of melody, like the sighing of the night wind over the shadowy lake, and among the columnar pines; then airs, which themselves suggest motion, and number, and diversity of costume; then an outburst of fiery impatience; then the stern catechism, and the eager reply; and, lastly, a whole people devoting itself to a noble purpose, in the presence of ancestral mountains, and with the eye of newly-risen Day upon it, to register the sacred oath. It is in a deep spirit of appreciation of this noble scene that, in her letter to Meyerbeer, George Sand (Madame Dudevant), after having measured the boundaries of descriptive music with "the golden reed" of true poetry, breaks out, — "How many a time have I anathematised the mimic sunrise which accompanies the last chorus of the second act of 'Guillaume Tell!' O machinery of canvas, pasteboard, and tinsel, what need is there of

you to that magnificent prayer, — where the whole rays of the sun expand majestically, increase, blaze abroad, and seem from the horizon to strike out into glory the peaks of the snow mountains at the last note of the sacred strain? The music has a power beyond yours."

One more feature of peculiar excellence in the "Guillaume Tell" deserves notice, — the vigour and variety of its choruses and *airs de ballet*. Important as the latter have always been to a grand French opera, — the unbending Gluck himself having been compelled to arrange gavottes and minuets to suit the taste of the dancers of his time, — there is in this part of Rossini's work an originality and a completeness which raise him high above his competitors. Witness the first Swiss chorus and dance, the robust and spirited music of the archery scene; and Gessler's pageant, with its superb marches, and its brilliant soldiers' waltz — one of the two movements, the first *finale* being the other, in which Rossini's old *crescendo* is employed. Witness the *Tyrolienne*, in itself a gem of grace, and melody, and pastoral freshness, even when dis-

engaged from all remembrance associated with her who doubled its attractions by her own! To write music which a Taglioni shall adopt, and which shall still stand alone, by its own strength and invention, when a Taglioni has laid it aside, is no common feat. To characterise that particular dance would require a playfulness as airy and delicate, and a pen as subtly pointed, as the King of the *feuilletons* has employed when tracing "*La Sylphide's*" * career of triumph. Happily, the attempt is not called for: the tune is on every pianoforte, on every street-scraper's kit, on every Savoyard's *vielle*. Worn and familiar, but beyond the power of street-scraper or Savoyard to vulgarise, it has the welcome beauty and sweetness of one of those flowers which never lose their elegance, whether found in some high hedgerow, betraying their hiding-place by their scent, or thrust forth in the feverish hand of the haggard seller of bou-

* The criticisms of Jules Janin upon Taglioni, which have appeared in Le Journal des Debats, are in his happiest and most fanciful vein; and are worth collecting for their own sake, as well as hers whom they commemorate.

quets on the stairs of a gaming-house.* But, lest Speculation run too far into "a thousand needless similies," I had better have done, however unwilling to leave a work so full to overflowing with the beauty and health, and life which endure, as the "Guillaume Tell" of Rossini. To relish it properly, it should be heard in Paris; and were I the King of the French, I would emulate Napoleon's absolutism in theatricals, that it might be heard, once at least, with Lablache for hero, — and for its Arnold, Duprez.

* This illustration is not employed at random. I passed some hours at Frescati's, as a looker-on, a very few evenings before it was closed for ever by the Citizen King. To watch the mechanically silent routine of the gaming-table, and the haggard impassive faces of those that sat round it, was a sufficiently painful excitement; and I know not that I was ever more startled than, upon leaving those glaring and mysterious saloons, — where so much Passion and Despair had silently wrought their work in former days, — to be accosted by the shrill importunity of a meanly-dressed girl, little more, indeed, than a child, who was crouched at the foot of the staircase, an hour after midnight, with a basket full of bunches of violets. These, she vociferated, were "fresh gathered," to sell to the company as they came out!

CHAP. VI.

DUPREZ.

French Tenor Singing. — Garat. — Geliotte. — Elleviou. — Foolish Rumours concerning Duprez. — First Impression of his Appearance. — A Sketch of his early Days ; — His Training in Italy ; — His Position on his Arrival at Paris ; — His *Début* in " Guillaume Tell." — The last Song. — The Part of *Arnold*. — Duprez ill supported. — Duprez as an Actor in " La Muette ;"— In " La Juive." — Duprez as *Otello*. — Extract from Journal.—A young Spanish Princess.—The present Position of Duprez in Paris.—Failure of the " Benvenuto Cellini " of M. Berlioz. — *Feuilleton* of the latter, touching Theatricals in general, and Duprez in particular. — Whimsical Calculation of his Emoluments ; — Their influence on Opera.

A GALLERY of French tenor singers would not be the least edifying chamber in the Pantheon of Art. Few traces would be there found, it is true, of the well-toned and well-cultivated voices, which distinguished the great men of the Italian opera. That they sung through their noses, is as certain as that the Parisian opera songstresses terrified Dr. Burney and Horace

Walpole, by their energetic screaming. Many of them, too, were afflicted with that diseased tendency towards a *falsetto*, which, in our own country, has run the inordinate length of pushing innocent, portly, middle-aged gentlemen into warbling (more oddly to the eye than agreeably to the ear) the sublimest songs of Handel's "Messiah." In hastily running over the record of the achievements of French singers, ancient and modern *, I have been struck by finding so many of them possessed of something more than that staple of our English theatrical vocalists — the "Vox et præterea nihil." The story of Garat's early life, for instance, is pecu-

* I cannot but here express my acknowledgments to the "Biographie des Musiciens" of M. Fétis, which, as far as it has been carried, is a perfect storehouse of anecdote and information touching French art. As regards other countries, his entries are far less satisfactory. In English music, for instance, he is strangely incomplete and astray, as Mr. Braham must think, should he happen to see it stated that he died of the cholera in the month of August, 1834! It is a question whether the omissions or admissions of M. Fétis are the most curious. But the French return the compliment of English indifference to their music with a thorough good-faith which is amusing.

liarly agreeable. He had been destined by his father for the profession of an advocate ; but, being sent from Bourdeaux to Paris to finish his studies, was seduced from the service of Jurisprudence to that of St. Cecilia, by his intimacy with the Chevalier St. Georges *, and by the arrival of Mesdames Todi and Mara — the Sontag and Malibran of their day—who finished the work Nature had begun, and made a further perusal of codes and pandects impossible. He *must* be a singer ! His father, a severe man, discountenanced his son's change of pursuits, as

* This Chevalier St. Georges was a remarkable man in the musical annals of Paris during the eighteenth century ; a clever violin player, a composer of agreeable operas,— like the infamously celebrated La Maupin, a capital fencer, — and a man of notorious success in the world *des bonnes fortunes*. He was, however, a Creole : and upon his presenting himself to Government as a candidate for the directorship of the Opera, about the year 1776, a memorial was addressed to the Queen, by Mesdemoiselles Sophie Arnould, Guimard (the *danseuse* who, like the old Countess of Desmond, figured "on the floor" after she was sixty), La Beaumesnil, Rosalie, and other actresses, representing that their honour and their privileges alike forbade their subjecting themselves to the control of a coloured man.

uncompromisingly as any English father in the law could have done. Even when the youth was raised to the brilliant position of secretary to Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois, and had been promoted to take part in the Queen's private musical performances — to the young man's pleadings, that Art as well as Law might open ways to distinction, he vouchsafed only this stern reply: "I am aware that, in the degenerate days of Rome, musicians and mimes were favourites with the Emperors." But there was something honest and generous in this French Saunders Fairford. On the young Garat happening to visit Bourdeaux in his patron's train, it was proposed to him to sing in a concert to be given for the benefit of Beck, his music-master, who was at that time in misfortune. The artist hesitated thus publicly to outrage the prejudices of his father: who, to the surprise of every one, said, "My son's talent has cost him an honourable establishment, and his father's friendship: let it at least afford him the opportunity of doing a good action." A

reconciliation could not but follow so honest a display of right feeling.

Though Garat be, perhaps, solitary in his position and his resources, it is remarkable how many other of the French singers have given signs of ability beyond the narrow sphere of our own throats. Geliotte, for instance, wrote the music of several ballets; Elleviou three opera books. In our own day Duprez, and Masset of the Opéra Comique, are agreeable composers. I could bring half a score more of similar examples for the benefit of our aspirants to the operatic stage of England. If such a thing is ever again to exist, great would be the gain of their remembering that a variety of attainments are but a variety of chances for success; — that the singer who acted as secretary to a Prince, must have had the demeanour of good society; — that the singer who could write an opera book, could hardly be a stupid actor; — that the singer who can compose respectably, must needs be a good musician.

From a few meditated speculations on the ancient manner of singing in France, I have

been led away to the manners and cultivation of the artists too far to return without fear of becoming prosy. After all, so entirely gone are the days when it might be said of the Orfeo or Roland of L'Académie, or the Romeo or Joconde of the Opéra Comique, "such or such a nose has a good voice," that past malpractices and false traditions may be left to those who make themselves uneasy about fossil music; and no further preamble is needed to a sketch of the most extraordinary tenor singer I have ever heard. I was introduced to him, as has already been said, on my second hearing of "Guillaume Tell," in the November of the year 1837.

What I expected in Duprez it is now hard to recollect. Some of those floating nursery tales had preceded him, with which a credulous public delights to stimulate its curiosity with regard to any celebrated artist. There was an anecdote of the Neapolitan steamers having sailed from port, without passengers, leaving the latter enthralled in San Carlos, by the magnificent singing of Duprez in "Le Bravo," — another of some wonderful confection, by which a poor

thread of a voice had been wrought up into one of the most powerful organs in Europe. One does not ask concerning a singer, "What is he like?" or "How tall may he be?" And my curiosity had been only confined to the voice and style of him who had driven the idol of Paris from his throne at the Opera.

Never was I more surprised by the aspect of any person, than by the appearance of the successor to poor portly Nourrit. We have read of "an interesting ugliness," — of a discord of feature and proportion, in the midst of which some element of fascination yet remains, or which charms by its capability of receiving the impress of strong and varied expression. But never was this seeming paradox so strikingly instanced as in the case of Duprez. A short man, his figure tapering from his head downwards— eyes, though keen and piercing, any thing but handsome; a mouth, wearing a sour and saturnine expression when closed, and when opening, (Heaven knows how widely!) giving the face the aspect of a grotesque mask; — gaunt cheeks and sullen lips alike ungarnished by any

of the trimming of beard or *moustache* with which the youths of France know how to cover barren places, or to balance too prominent features — a high beetling forehead, with veins that swell and writhe like serpents on passionate occasions — and hair neither profuse nor growing gracefully — such are the entries to be found in my journal of 1837 to the discredit of the outer man of Duprez. I am now much inclined to dispute their correctness, and, like my friend Madame ——, to aver that he is the handsomest man in France.

Certain it is, that of all the tenor singers I have ever heard, on the stage, this admirable artist appears to me to rise the highest. The quartett, of which Pasta would be the *soprano*, Pisaroni the *contralto*, and Lablache the bass, might claim him for fourth. His style is worthy of theirs. In voice, Nature has not been too liberal. The organ may naturally have been thick, inflexible, and, however much wrought out by unceasing study, will probably never be rendered capable of that spontaneous and florid execution with which Rubini knows so well

how to conceal the ravages of Time. There is no manufacturing an Italian voice: and M. le Prince Belgiojoso is still unapproached in my experience, as regards manliness, sweetness, and quality of tone, — his glorious countryman Donzelli not forgotten. Duprez was born at Paris in the year 1806, of respectable and humble parentage. He was early placed under the tuition of that indefatigable enthusiast, M. Choron, and appeared at the Odéon, during the time that that theatre was open as a third opera house, with little or no success. His voice is said then to have been very poor, and his style conformable. But so it was said of Pasta, by the insolent wardrobe-woman, whose contempt of the Medea in embryo is on record. Enough that Duprez left Paris in 1828; M. Choron alone prophesying a bright future to him, for he had possibly the best knowledge of his pupil's energy. And certain it is, that, while going through the schooling of Italian vocalisation, he must have run a course of *cavatinas* and airs, seductive enough to enervate the style of any one less essentially and resolutely

energetic, and to unfit him for character, as compared with song, singing. His great Italian successes were won in such insipid parts as the lover's in "Parisina," "Lucia," "Beatrice di Tenda," &c. &c. Worse preparation than these for the French opera, in some respects, could hardly be imagined: for the Parisian tenor must act as well as sing; must understand the mystery of situation, as well as of *falsetto;* and deliver his recitative with character, as well as warble sweetly the peculiar melody which suits his humour. The French opera-books are tragedies or comedies. The French opera public is very nearly as dramatic as it is vocal. A more trying position for an artist could hardly be imagined than Duprez was called upon to take when he returned to Paris. On the one side was Rubini delighting all the frequenters of the Salle Favart by his delicious finish, and his voluptuously passionate expression — a dangerous rival for any singer one half Italian! On the other side, was a company which had been half formed and modelled by Nourrit, and which was too soon deprived of a *prima donna,*

able, in right of grandeur of style, to afford him the support he required — by the retirement of the ill-fated Falcon. The repertory of parts, too, which Duprez was called upon to undertake, had been written for a voice higher than his own, and, though not absolutely devoid of room for the display of large expression, was, nevertheless, more largely interspersed with passages of agility, and phrases constantly pushed not merely to the heights — but to the pinnacles, as it were — of the extreme *falsetto*, than any music calculated advantageously to exhibit Duprez should be. Such preparations and such difficulties being taken into account, the triumph was as extraordinary as complete which he achieved on his first appearance in "Guillaume Tell." His new, fervid, and powerful spirit lighting up an old and familiar part, gave it a reading as different as possible from all past readings, but felt to be legitimate and satisfactory. If there was less fineness of diction in his recitative, there was a musical force and pathos in every sound of it which Nourrit never reached. If he could not

throw out the high *soprano* passages of certain movements (some reaching the extravagance of C sharp in the treble scale) with as prompt a point and brilliancy as his predecessor, there was felt to be dignity, a rhythm, and an impressiveness in his *cantabile*, far beyond all "the sentiment through the nose" of any singer more exclusively Gallic in training. And, as it were, to clench the conviction that the French opera had made a step and gained a treasure in his acquisition, after having wrought up the two duetts, and the trio, with the utmost care, and taken his share in the business of the stage during three acts with unflagging energy and care, — he wound up the part by electrifying, with a double measure of force, animation, and vocal power, the final "Asile héréditaire." It is an era in the musician's experiences of tenor singing to have heard that song. There is a might and a passion in the delivery of the theme of the martial *cabaletta* so resistless, that when the whole chorus joins in his ritornel, "Suivez moi!" — to me, at least, the whole machinery of orchestra, and foot-lights, canvas

châlet, and glacier of plank, fades away; and I hear the march of a mighty people, unconquerable in the force of a noble object!

The part of Arnold offers little or no scope for the actor, and yet Duprez as completely fills the stage by its presence as did Lablache, in London, by his noble presentment of the hero's more prominent character. No one in Paris acts ill; but the "Guillaume" of L'Académie has, since the arrival of Duprez, become a person of secondary interest. During the three years which have elapsed since as Arnold he won his first home triumphs, he has been the main stay of L'Académie, in defiance of circumstances any thing but favourable. The new operas written for him, have, save Donnizetti's last, "La Favorite," been all failures: — the new *cantatrici*, brought forward to replace Mademoiselle Falcon — a series of raw school girls from the Conservatoire, whom it was necessary to make disappear in rapid succession. But Duprez has never failed himself or the public. I have followed him through almost the whole of his repertory, and become familiar, not only with

his admirable powers as a dramatic singer, but with his force as an actor. This, it is true, moves in a restricted circle, partly owing perhaps to his physical conformation. In all characters requiring demeanour he fails, though he treads the stage well for one so under-sized. The elegant vivacity, the gentlemanly composure of the Chevalier, are beyond his reach; his "Robert," therefore, is rough, irritable, uncourtly; his worst acted part. In "Masaniello," on the other hand, he is admirable; the fire of the South is in every glance and gesture — the *lazzi* of the fisherman, and the elevation of the popular leader, are admirably combined. There is a deep, but irascibly jealous tenderness in all his intercourse with his sister, which is in the highest style of art; and the sudden outburst of peasant exultation when, paraded in the Viceroy's robe, and on the Viceroy's charger, he recognises his old comrades of the mole and the market, becomes absolutely touching when the future is adverted to, — and it is remembered that the simple-hearted man is rejoicing in the purple and fine

linen of his new estate, upon the crumbling verge of Conspiracy and Death.

Another part in which Duprez is admirable must be here also commemorated, as I shall forbear to expatiate at length upon the opera which it distinguishes, — I mean "La Juive" of M. Halévy.

Those who are familiar with the English versions of the story, will remember that M. Scribe, by placing a coarse Shylock more directly than his prototype in the way of the persecutions which the Princes of Europe so unworthily heaped on the Israelite, and by giving to the Jew of Constance a daughter, — no shrewish Jessica, but a resolved, passionate, pensive maiden, who is unlawfully sought by the Emperor's son, — has wrought up a drama strong enough in the fibre of interest to bear being entirely stripped of its music. They will remember, too, that the Jew's vengeance upon his persecutors, when the disclosure of this love-secret exposes both to a cruel law, takes the terrible form of his acquiescing in the martyrdom of the innocent Rachel, because she is not his

daughter, but the long-lost child of the peasant Cardinal de Brogny. In retaliation, Eleazar puts the haughty churchman on the rack, by throwing out hints that a secret lies in his keeping; and, finally, by revealing it at the moment when the flames of the caldron, decreed by the father, close over his child! Fierce and frightful though this story be, as affording scope for dramatic situation, there are few like it in the library of opera books: — and I have never listened to the flat and elaborately-pretending music to which it is mated, without wishing that a story as enthralling in power had fallen under the treatment of him who so passionately rendered the agonies of the grave-digging scene in "Fidelio," — or even into the less vigorous hands of the composer of "Guillaume Tell." Now that the prodigal splendours of its processions and caparisons and town-scenes are somewhat faded, and that the Parisian public, for national glory's sake, has consented to swallow the dry science and frivolous melody of M. Halévy, — "La Juive" maintains its place by the strong interest of its story, and the striking

vivacity with which the singer has converted an opera skeleton into a character. There is the history of a tribe in the very timid cat-like step with which the Pariah of Constance creeps down the stage; cringing into a malicious dwarfishness as he approaches the magnificent portal of the Cathedral, and casting quick uneasy glances of mock humility among the holyday keepers of the town, lest any should eye his beautiful daughter too rudely. But when I am speaking of Duprez as an actor, I would particularly allude to the great scene of the fourth act,—the one in which the regret-stricken Cardinal seeks his prisoner, then under sentence of torture and death, to gain tidings of the child he has never forgotten. It is now the Jew's turn. The oppressor is to be oppressed, the torturer to be tortured. Every furrow traced by cunning on a forehead, old but not venerable, is changed into a malicious wrinkle. The eyes, with a triumphant and tantalising significance, pierce to the inmost heart of the bereaved father; the lean clenched fingers tremble, as if the avenging knife and the

"pound of flesh" were in their clutch; the form dilates as with a tiger-like restlessness the usurer of emotion prowls round and round his august suppliant,—secure that neither rack nor fire can wring from him the ecstasy of revenge! If he show a willingness, for one moment, to barter the tidings closely locked within him for his own life and liberty, it is but to torture the Cardinal with false hopes. Painfully does the music labour through the passion of this scene; but I have never seen it given by Duprez, never watched his elastic and stealthy footsteps, and the gleam of his cruel malignant eyes, without extricating myself from the melo-dramatic rhyme of Scribe, and the dull platitudes of M. Halévy, and listening to that wonderful climax of vindictive determination which Shakspeare put into Shylock's mouth, — "If you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? — revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? — why, revenge. The villany you teach me I

will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction!"

Once only have I heard Duprez sing any of the Italian music, by the study and execution of which he has made his style so much more richly vocal than most of his French predecessors. This was the third act of "Otello," which he went through with Mademoiselle Pauline Garcia on a benefit night. In spite of the drawbacks of a lazy orchestra, and of his being associated in scenes of such intense power with a Desdemona whose genius is not as yet seconded by her physical strength, this, too, was a noble performance. "Though slackening the *tempo* a little more than is admissible," says a note in a journal of 1840, made immediately after the performance was over, "Duprez more nearly satisfied me than any Otello I have ever seen: for he is twice the vocalist that Donzelli was, though far less magnificently gifted by nature. His recitative was wonderful. I tried to fill out the other part of the dialogue by calling up Pasta. His acting, too, was superb. It was the restlessness of one tormented

by a guilty purpose, rather than the sacrificial sternness of him whom wrong and revenge have turned to stone or iron! In the murder scene, the manner in which he screened himself behind the chair, as though Guilt were seeking protection from its own horrid thoughts, was fearful. There was something sanguinary and Moorish in the whole performance, which gave the part, to me, quite a new colour. I shall never forget, too, a face among the audience, which, turning round for one moment, I caught, fixed on the stage, and in admirable keeping with the scene. It belonged to one of the royal family of Spain in the box close behind us—a Velasquez portrait stiff from its frame. She was a young fair girl, with *blue blood* in every feature, and a haughtiness in her formal, upright attitude, strange and startling in one so young. Her square impassive mouth was closed with a quiet and stern decision, nothing short of fearful. One could fancy such a presence overlooking an *Auto-da-fé*, without its young owner testifying either pity or aversion!"

With all these high artistic excellencies, and

though confessedly more profitable to the treasury of his theatre than any one singer has ever been before, Duprez is nevertheless not the favourite of cultivated Paris that Nourrit was. He is more of a singer — less of an universal artist. Besides suffering most unjustly from a certain feeling of disapproval on the part of the public, as if he had been the cause of the tragical fate of his predecessor, — he is less popular than Nourrit in the green-room, where report declares him to be tenacious and disobliging, — less intimately moulded into the creeds and coteries of Young France. He sings requiems, but professionally — and not at an Abbé Chatel's church. The *feuilletonists* are beginning to be a little weary of his supremacy; one or two of them have personal reasons to ostracise him, and do so accordingly with all the *finesse* which the gentlemen of the French press know how to use so cuttingly. For instance, the withdrawal of the art-opera of M. Berlioz, "Benvenuto Cellini," has been laid to his door, and not to the utter incomprehensibility of its music. Le Journal des Débats, therefore, has become

his covert enemy. M. Jules Janin, who with his left hand owns that he understands nothing about Music, while with his right he throws off the most delicate and fanciful rhapsodies of no-meaning on such imaginative works as the "Romeo and Juliet Symphony" of M. Berlioz, has more than once held the singer up to condemnation as one whose views are narrow and selfish, and who would betray his art (to imitate the writer's own phraseology) "for ten pieces." More recently still, the unsuccessful composer himself has aimed a dart in the same direction, under the pretext of a *feuilleton* in Le Journal des Débats upon theatricals in general. In the positions laid down by M. Berlioz there is so much enlarged sense, that, not inquiring how far the case to which they refer illustrates them, or otherwise, I can hardly do better than close this sketch of the finest tenor singer I have encountered on the stage, by translating a few passages: —

"Let it be said that the number of dramatic situations is limited: we know it. Ingenuity, invention, genius even, can only vary their

combination by disguising, more or less, the physiognomy of their details. We have nothing left but to resign ourselves to this fact.

"The art of Music is much richer by reason of its youth, its great complexity, above all, of the unlimited liberty which has been fiercely denied to it for centuries, but which Nature herself could not fail to give it, sooner or later, and which it has gained to-day. The complete emancipation of Music is as recent as incontestable. Even the public has accepted it, and towards Music that public with confidence turns for those fresh and powerful emotions which it has no longer to expect from the other arts, and for which its thirst becomes stronger and stronger.

"That confidence, however, is now failing. Is it to become utterly extinct? If we advance, is Art to remain immovable? What holds it back? One might answer, the timidity, perhaps excusable, of ministers who mistrust the success of too daring innovations, — or the rarity of those pioneer-artists who are courageous enough to dare for awhile to walk alone, strong enough to

open a new path, persevering enough to beckon after them the multitude, and to make no reply to its reproaches, nay, even to its injuries when fatigued, save by promising them that rare discoveries are at hand: —sagacious enough not to lose their way, and to keep their eyes fixed on their guiding-star, however distracting be the other lights of Heaven. What holds Art back? The servants who do its will; who are for ever ready to heap the reproach of bitterness and feebleness upon the new productions submitted to them: yet, by a strange contradiction, are not the less armed with a blind and instinctive severity against any thing presenting to them unknown forms, new shades of colour, difficulties to be overcome — the fruits of reflection, labour, and talent. What holds Art back? Above all things, the overweening ambition of certain singers: they behold in it nothing but gold and garlands; and the means most certain to procure these readily are the only ones they will employ. They have remarked that certain melodic formulas, certain vocal exercises, certain arbitrary

terminations — certain insignificant rhythms, have the property of calling down instantly such applause as constitutes a more than sufficient reason for desiring their introduction: — nay, for demanding it, in every part, in defiance of all respect for expression, or thought, or dignity of style; a reason, on the other hand, for despising all productions more independently and loftily conceived. They know the effect of the old means which they employ habitually; they do not know the effect of those proposed to them; and, not considering themselves as disinterested witnesses in the question, abstain from them as much as possible, in doubtful cases. Already the weakness of certain composers, who have satisfied their exactions, has encouraged them to dream of introducing into our theatres the musical customs of Italy: but at this end they will not arrive.

* * * * *

"Nothing, however, is stranger than the unmeasured and scarcely credible increase of the importance granted to certain singers, as compared with that which it has been dared

to refuse to the composers. I blush to enter into such details; but since every thing in theatrical matters resolves itself into an affair of money, they ought to be well understood, for the interest of art, of administration, and, lastly, of the artists themselves, who have every thing to lose in the ruin of the theatres.

"In the time of Louis Quatorze, who created L'Académie Royale, when the principal artists had an annual revenue of four thousand *francs*, the author's share, for a grand composition, was a hundred *francs*. At present, this same share, for the first forty representations, has mounted to two hundred and fifty *francs*: and if it had kept pace with the monstrous increase of which we have a specimen in the salary of one hundred thousand *francs*, now received by Duprez (for instance), it should have reached two thousand five hundred *francs*; — a sum entirely incompatible with the expenses necessary to the execution in the stage arrangement of the most meagre opera.

"In the instances cited, doubtless, we have

an unique example of vocal fortune *; but it excites and keeps alive, among all the other artists, hopes and ambitions in proportion to the gifts which each one, in reality or fancy, possesses. If the first tenor has one hundred thousand *francs* — why not the second, fifty? From thence to the absurd, to the impossible, there is only one step.

"If we divide these enormous sums into fragments, we shall arrive at a curious result.

"The first tenor, with his salary of one hundred thousand *francs*, plays about seven times every

* A notice or two on the comparative payment of French tenor singers is not here out of place. A hundred years ago, in 1738, Geliotte, the tenor of the Grand Opera, had a fixed salary of twelve thousand *livres*, three hundred *livres* of annual gratuity, and about five or six hundred *livres* of extraordinary gratuities. These sums were gradually augmented to a fixed salary of three thousand *francs*, with ordinary and extraordinary gratuities of two thousand more. In 1812, Elleviou, who was the favourite at the Opera Comique, and received a salary of eighty-four thousand *francs*, demanded that the sum should be increased to one hundred and twenty thousand; which being denied at Napoleon's express instance, he retired from the theatre.

month; consequently, eighty-four times every year: and hence receives a little more than eleven hundred *francs* (44*l.*) for each performance. Now, if we suppose that a part consists of eleven hundred notes, or syllables, that will be at the rate of a *franc* a syllable. Thus, in 'Guillaume Tell'—

"Ma (1 *franc*), presence (3 *fr.*), pour vous est peut-être un outrage (9 *fr.*).

"Mathilde (3 *fr.*), mes pas indiscrets (100 *sous*).

"Ont osè jusqu'a vous se frayer un passage! (13 *fr.*)

"Total, 34 *francs*. This is talking gold with a vengeance!

"It must be honestly owned, that if it be pleasant to have our joke in this style, the gods and goddesses of song have their money's worth for it.

"But while we laugh, the theatres pay; and they pay so much, that, one fine day, finding their treasuries empty, they will, every one, shut their doors; and these divinities will be reduced to give lessons in *solfeggio*, (such, that is, as can,)

or to sing in the public streets with a guitar, four candle ends, and a green baize. Then, perhaps, may the musical edifice be reconstructed on a basis more solid: for neither art nor manners can suffer its utter destruction."

Fine raillery and sound reason! — but Duprez has the throne. Long may it be ere failure of voice or diminution of energy give raillery or reason the power of compelling him to yield it to a successor, — that he may, in his turn, be lamented and deified by the journalists and composers of Paris, as Nourrit has been!

CHAP. VII.

THE MASTERPIECE OF FRENCH OPERA — "LES HUGUENOTS."

Morning in old Paris. — First Introduction to "Les Huguenots." — M. Vèron and "La Juive." — Spectacle. — Feelings and Furniture. — Brilliant Scenery. — The Subject of "Les Huguenots" foretold in the Grimm and Diderot Correspondence. — Anticipated by Lee and Purcell. — Other English Anticipations. — Why "Les Huguenots" is the Masterpiece of French Opera. — Its Purpose. — George Sand's Letter to Meyerbeer. — Limits of Character-Music. — *Marcel* and the *Corale*. — *Valentine* and Mademoiselle Falcon. — The latter's melancholy Story. — True Character of the Music of "Les Huguenots." — Its *Solos* thoroughly French. — Its Choruses. — Sketch of the first — second — third Acts. — The Septuor. — The fourth Act. — "*Le Benediction des Poignards*." — The Grand Duet. — Respective Limits of Opera and Tragedy. — The closing Scenes. — Conclusion.

I HEARD "Les Huguenots" for the first time on the third evening of my first visit to Paris, — after a long morning spent in the indulgence of that eager appetite for sight-seeing which only

confinement and inexperience can give. I had been exploring every corner of Notre Dame, and watching, with the curiosity of a newly-imported Englishman, a gipsy girl dancing in the Parvis with a crowd of picturesque figures round her, just where Esmeralda danced! And I had been roaming through the labyrinths of that strange building, the Palais de Justice, with its grim towers, and its spacious law courts, its exquisite Sainte Chapelle, and its long arcades where Law and Merchandise make so odd a mosaic, and where the *grisette* composedly tying her garters (as I saw her) on the step of a *modiste's* door, must abide the risk of being run down by some breathless advocate, with all the importance and hurry and twice the noise of the haunters of Chancery Lane and Westminster Hall.

Such a pilgrimage was certain to leave me bewildered by its novelty, and excited by thick-crowding associations to that point at which all first impressions of any work of art become indistinct and are worth little. To be honest, too, on the evening in question, I was staring

at the stage, rather than listening to it; and with good cause.

"Les Huguenots" was the last successful production of the operas combining the talents of Mademoiselle Falcon, Madame Dorus-Gras, MM. Nourrit and Levasseur, which so brilliantly illustrated the reign of M. Vèron. He understood, if ever did mortal manager, not only his public, but how to present a succession of works, which should impress either by the force of their music, or their dramatic interest, or their *spectacle*. To the "Robert" of Meyerbeer succeeded Auber's "Gustave," with its pretty music, its more than pretty third act, and its sumptuous masquerade scene: — to Auber's "Gustave," "La Juive," by M. Halévy. "*Bah!*" exclaimed an atrabilious critic in spectacles, whom one day, in the concert room of the Rue Bergere, I chanced to hear making so free with all the celebrities of Paris, that there was no mistaking his being a neglected composer — "*Bah!* as to 'La Juive,' 'tis an opera for the eyes! All Paris came to look at the scenery and the armour, and at the Em-

peror eating the golden apple; and so it ended in all Paris fancying that M. Halévy was a second Beethoven! Vèron could have crammed any thing down. If he had brought out the 'Guido *,' for instance, instead of Duponchel, that would have been a success! What a plague scene he would have given us, with all the dead bodies lying about the stage, — and *such* an orgie!"

But as a pageant, "Les Huguenots," though less glittering than "La Juive" must have been when first produced, has more than enough to content the most exacting eye. Those fare ill, I suspect, with a certain class of critics, who own themselves to be fascinated by the miracles which a scene-painter and a stage-tailor can work; but to write of the French Opera, and omit all mention of "MM. Sechan, Feuchères, Dieteste, et Desplechin," would be as absurd as to forget Grisi's sumptuous beauty in enumerating her gifts and graces. I have heard one of the liveliest of modern authoresses, no less brilliant in her told than in her written

* An opera, the scene and time of which are those of The Decameron — of which more in a later page.

anecdotes, describe a manuscript once submitted to her by an unfortunate novelist, which was intended to be a tale of thrilling interest. This was produced in an original fashion. So often as a great scene recurred, the author would describe the fair Sabina as reclined "on a gilt sofa, covered with crimson velvet, with six elbow chairs and two ottomans to match, plunged in the deepest sorrow," or the faithful Orlando as "rushing to her rescue, up a staircase, the balustrade o fwhich was of richly carved oak of the best period, in peculiarly good preservation, and the steps whereof were laid down with tapestry of a unique pattern." The would-be Scott turned out to have served his apprenticeship, to Life as well as to Fiction, in an upholsterer's warehouse! Some such entry of "the arras thus, the pictures thus," rather than of the music, I find in my journal of 1836, after my first night of "Les Huguenots." The morning scene of the cavaliers in the first act, with its crowd of young nobles in courtly dresses, not forgetting the pair playing at chess in the left hand corner, with all the gentlemanly abstraction of

real life, who may be there seen even unto this day; — the rich terrace under the walls and above the moat of Chenonceau, with its imposing flight of steps, down which the court of Marguerite is to sweep in all the number and gorgeousness of a real court procession; — the third act in the Prè aux Clercs, with its apparently countless multitude of people; — the gay bridal procession of the ill-starred Valentine; — the arm waving a wild torch out of the upper window of the *cabaret*, when the fray between Catholics and Protestants breaks out; — Queen Margaret, on her white palfrey (not forgetting that property of Queen Elizabeth, on which M. Puff laid so much stress, to wit, her side-saddle); — the throng of Bohemian dancers in their little scarlet caps and black *plumes de coq*, — and the illuminated gondola which glides in "with harp, and pipe, and symphony," to bear the bride to the arms of her unloved lord and master: — I find all these things, I say, journalized in precedence of the grand septuor, or the magnificent fourth act. To this day, I cannot lose the sense of their splendid

pertinence and aid as accessories indispensable to the effect; for Meyerbeer's master work, to be enjoyed as it deserves, demands not only the execution, but also the pomp of the Parisian stage. And I cannot but wish that every one of my countrymen, who has any concern in the re-establishment of our lyric drama, would take a journey to Paris, for the express purpose of seeing what may be done, whether as regards musical combinations, or managerial preparations, in the masterpiece of French Opera.

It is curious to find the practicabilities of the subject of "Les Huguenots" engaging the attention of the critics and wits in France, seventy years ago. In a letter "on the composer Monsigny, the French Opera, and the Encyclopedie," published in the "Correspondence inédite de Grimm et Diderot," — after many shrewd and sensible remarks on the characteristics of the Grand Opera of Paris, and the mixture it contains of dancing with singing, to which the writer strongly objects, — "Remark," says he, "that the dance may be historical in any piece, as well as the song. Give me a sublime genius, and I

will show you Catherine de Medicis making her preparations for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in the midst of the festivals and dances of the marriage of the King of Navarre. Such a contrast between apparent tranquillity and the tempest of crime brewing, such a mixture of gallantry and cruelty, if I know the art of moving, would make you shudder to the bone; but do not fear your ever being able to see any thing of the kind on the stage of the Opera." Fifty years earlier than this, our own grandiloquent Nat Lee had availed himself of the subject for his tragedy, "The Massacre of Paris," which probably owed its origin to a more ancient play by Marlowe; and among the other scenic compositions of our greatest dramatic composer, Purcell, not the least excellent is the bass song, "Thy Genius, lo!" given to the monitory Spirit, who hovers over the couch of Charles IX. when he is vexed by remorse for the crime to which he has consented. There are points in Lee's play — in particular, a scene at the commencement of the third act betwixt the Queen Mother and Marguerite — which possibly may have suggested

situations to that master of stage transformation, M. Scribe. Indeed, our English dramatists and legend-mongers, old and recent, have furnished a contingent to the French romanticists, large enough to surprise those who believe all our stage-plots are taken from the French; or, if not furnished, have anticipated some of their best subjects. "Masaniello," for instance, was treated in 1651 *, "by a gentleman who was himself a witness in the whole of the Rebellion of Naples" — and again in 1700, by Tom Durfey. Auber's "Lac de fees" was anticipated by the tale of the Man and the Mermaid, in Crofton Croker's faëry legends — in itself an Irish version of the more graceful Arabian story, Hassan el Básrah. That humorous scene in "The Picture" of Massinger, where the chaste and noble Sophia entraps and confines in a tower Ricardo and Ubaldo, the coxcombical and bragging Iachimos of the court of Hungary, has been prettily reproduced on a miniature scale in "La Quenouaille de Barberine," one of M. Alfred de Musset's graceful cabinet comedies.

* See the "Companion to the Playhouse." 1764.

Not to be tedious, however, in enumerations, — "Les Huguenots" deserves, dramatically, as well as musically, the title I have given it. It unites in itself the most striking features of the *chefs d'œuvre* of French Opera. There is a touch in it of the chivalry and romance, and of the mystic enthusiasm of the "Robert;" there is the strong interest of "La Juive" in its story, and a like magnificence in its scenic pomps. Like "Guillaume Tell," it is at once a national and a historical opera; a local colour has been given to some of its scenes — witness the opening to the third act, with the revelry of the Clercs de la Basoche, and the Catholic litanies to the Virgin, the song of Coligni's soldiers, and the simple but impressive "*couvre feu*," in the Prè aux Clercs. Not a single element of contrast or colour seems to have escaped Meyerbeer. His opera, too, is to be considered as a work with a purpose expressed in music. Among the "Lettres d'un Voyageur" of George Sand is one addressed to the composer, meeting and amplifying his idea with such eloquent ingenuity, that I am too glad to

offer an imperfect paraphrase of it, in place of my own dimmer, though coincident, guesses at the subject. The date of the letter is Geneva; and after some sarcastic remarks upon the pulpit oratory of that town, — the occasion being a sermon as distasteful as most sermons at all dogmatically precise are to George Sand, — she thus continues, contrasting the "Robert" with its successor, in her own eloquent and characteristic manner: —

"When the nave was no longer filled with those impassive faces on whose forehead Lavater could only have written this one single word, '*Formality*,'— when those paternal and prosaic remonstrances of the nasal preacher had died away, — Reform, that mighty idea, which has neither emblem, nor veil, nor mystic ornaments, appeared to me in its bare and simple grandeur. That church, without tabernacle or sanctuary, those windows, where the sun shone through no painted glass, those wooden benches, where all are equal, — at least at prayer-time,— those chill and naked walls; —that aspect of order, in short, which appeared as if but yesterday it had

been established in a devastated Catholic church by severe military installation, impressed me with feelings of respect and sadness. Here and there a pelican or a chimæra — vestige of the ancient faith—was twined in an attitude of pain and imprisonment round the capital of a column. The vaults were neither Papist nor Huguenot. Lofty and deeply-arched, they appeared made to receive aspirations to Heaven of every tone, to echo the prayer and the invocation, into whatever form their burden might be cast. From the stones beneath my feet, never warmed by the knees of a Protestant, there seemed to issue grave voices: the accents of a calm and serene triumph — the sighs of the departing — the murmurs of tranquillity and resignation, of Faith in its last agonies, without the spasms and groans of Death. It was the voice of the Calvinist martyrs — martyrs without trance or ecstasy — whose sufferings were stifled by an austere pride and a solemn assurance in the future.

"It was natural that these imaginary strains should take, in my mind's ear, the form of the beautiful psalm in the opera of 'Les Huguenots;'

and while I fancied, too, that I heard, without, the furious cries and the close firing of the Catholics, a tall figure passed before mine eyes — one of the noblest figures of Drama — one of the finest personifications of the religious idea which the arts have produced in our time — the Marcel of Meyerbeer. And I saw, face to face, that statue of iron, in its strong buff suit, animated by the breath from above which the composer had bade descend and give it life. I saw it — forgive my presumption, O master spirit! — just as it appeared to yourself when you came to seek it, in the open and courageous hours of noon *, among the aisles of some Protestant temple, as wide and as bright as these. O musician! who are more of a poet than any of us, in what unknown hiding-place of your soul, in what secret treasury of your intelligence, did you discover those bold and distinct features, that conception simple as antiquity, true as history, transparent as conscience,

* It is a garish, broad, and peering day;
Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears.
Shelley.

strong as faith? You, who were so lately on your knees in the voluptuous recesses of Saint Marc's, in fancy building on yet more magnificent proportions that Sicilian cathedral of yours, steeping yourself in the incense of Catholicism at that mysterious hour when the light of the just kindled tapers gleams upon the gold and marble walls,—yielding yourself up to be seized and swayed by the tender and awful emotions of that holy place—how, then, could you, on entering the temple of Luther, thus evoke its stern poesy—thus call to life its heroic dead? We believed your soul to be as anxious and as timid as the soul of Dante, when led onward through Hell and Paradise by his genius, it was awe-struck or melted at every step he took. You had stolen the secret of the invisible choirs, at the moment when, on the elevation of the Host, the angels wrought in mosaic by Titian spread their wide and dusky wings on that firmament of Byzantine gold, upborne above the kneeling multitude. You had pierced the impenetrable silence of the tombs, and far down beneath the shuddering floor of the cathe-

dral you had caught the bitter wailings of the condemned, and the threats of the angels of darkness. You had possessed yourself of the profound meaning — the sublime sadness of these gloomy and grotesque allegories. Between the Angel and the Demon, between the fantastic Heaven and Hell of the Middle Ages, you had seen Man divided against himself, parted betwixt the flesh and the spirit, dragged towards the annihilation of debauchery, but protected by a life-giving intelligence, and saved by divine hope. You had painted this strife, these terrors, these pangs, these promises, this enthusiasm, in grave and impressive forms, leaving them still enveloped in the symbolical poetry which surrounded them. You had known how to trouble and to move us by the agency of beings of the fancy, and of impossible situations. And this because a man's heart must beat in the artist's bosom — a heart bearing the burning impress of real life; and this because true Art gives to every thing a significance, and the soundest philosophy and the gentlest human

sympathies must preside over the most brilliant caprices of genius.

* * * * *

That fine contest between audacious doubt and desperate courage, in the midst of those mystical yearnings and those enthusiastic aspirations towards the saints and angels which was prefigured in the "Robert," had already strongly demanded in you the finest combination of different powers, the most vivid understanding of the transformations of Man's thought and religious character. It has been said concerning 'Les Huguenots,' that its music is neither Protestant nor Catholic; which is identical with saying that the canticles of Luther, which they sing in Germany, have not a different character from the Gregorian chants of the Sistine chapel. As if Music were merely an arrangement of sounds, better or worse combined to tickle the ear, and the mere measure applicable to any dramatic situation sufficed for the expression of the emotions and passions of the lyric drama! * * * For myself, I will remain convinced, that it is in the

power of the fairest of the arts to paint every shade of sentiment, every phase of passion. Waiving metaphysical dissertations, there is nothing Music cannot express. For the description of the scenes of Nature she has ideal lines and colours which are neither minute nor precise, but are all the more vaguely and deliciously poetical. More exquisite and of wider scope than the loveliest painted landscape, does not Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony open to the imagination an enchantment of fair prospects, a whole valley of the Engadine, a terrestrial paradise, where the spirit may wander away, leaving behind her and seeing arise before her illimitable horizons — skies where the tempest is born, triumphs, and sinks to silence— from which the bird sings and the dew glistens on the forests — scenes where the bruised heart expands, where body and soul are re-vivified, and, one with Nature, enjoy her delicious repose?"—

* * * * *

"Tell me how, upon a few stanzas of insignificant rhyme, you were able to construct characters of such an individuality, to create

beings of the first order, where the author of the *libretto* has placed only accessory personages? Is not your old serving man, so rude, so intolerant,—as faithful to friendship as the Deity himself, in war cruel, contemptuous, irritable, a fanatic in cold blood, and tranquilly sublime in the hour of martyrdom — is not he the type of Lutheranism, in the whole extent of its poetical sense, in the whole acceptation of the true Ideal — of the artistic Real — that is, in all possible perfection? And that tall dark maiden, courageous even to enterprise,— in her passion so enthusiastically disdainful of the world, nay, of death itself, exchanging the fanaticism of Catholicism for the beatitude of Protestant martyrdom — is not she a figure, in her energy, in her generosity, worthy of a place by the side of Marcel? To Nevers, again, — that gallant young gentleman so exquisite in vest and buskin, who, in the *libretto*, has some four words to say, — you have known how to give a grace and elegance and chivalry which make one love him in spite of his coxcombry, while he utters, in charming melody, his delicate distress,

(I speak of the spirit of the music, not the letter of the text,)—'It would be impossible for any one to believe the extent to which I am every day persecuted!'

"Save in the two last acts the character of Raoul, with all your skill, is unable to rise from the weight of commonplace insipidity with which M. Scribe has laden it. Even Nourrit's true sensibility and rare intelligence contended in vain against the sentimental and silly nonentity of the hero, who is 'a thorough victim of circumstances,' as the romance writers phrase it. But how the part rises in the fourth act—how it *tells* in the great scene, which (prudery and objection put aside) I find so pathetic, so intensely mournful, so fearful,—so any thing rather than anacreontic! What a duet! What a dialogue! How has the musician wept, implored, raved, and conquered, where the author should have done it! O master! you are a noble dramatic poet, an arch-romancer! I give your Page over to the critics; placed in a position so ungracious as his, he could not have been more significant: but I

defend against the world your last trio — that inimitable scene, broken up and fragmentary, it is true; but because the situation demands it — because you would not have there *the musician's music* or *the author's music*, but, instead of these, the music of genuine passion and probable action, — music where the melody does not strive against the situation, nor insist upon a regular *cavatina* with the established *Coda* and passage as indispensable to the hero who falls, pierced with wounds, on the stage!"

Enthusiastic, intelligent, and strikingly poetical as this rhapsody is, I confess that, on reflection, I do not find the delineation of character to be so forcible or so felicitous in Meyerbeer's work, as in the brilliant fragment I have cited. As regards Marcel's Lutheranism, for instance, the composer's manner of working seems to me analogous to that of certain writers who have presented eccentrics on the stage, or in fiction, on the strength of a catch-word continually recurring: — a snuffled "yea," or "brother," repeated without stint, standing for a Quaker; — a few Scripture phrases repre-

senting the stout old Puritans, and a "Sith" or "By our bright lady," the Elizabethan Euphuist. Thus tried, the old servitor becomes not so much an embodied thought as a melody on two legs! In most cases his coming is indicated by the same psalm tune; which, as we know it be one of Luther's, must of course denote him to be a Lutheran. But elsewhere the expression of his creed as distinguished from the rough superstition of any other old swordsman, seems to me to reduce itself to one Huguenot troll — the rugged "Pif, Paf!" in the first act, and to a few bars in the first *finale;* and even in both these passages, to depend upon the words rather than on the music. The *costume*, if I may use such a term, which a peculiar belief throws over the thoughts and utterances of a man's life, is perhaps beyond the power of music to render, save by association, as in the case of the *corale* mentioned. The heroine Valentine, again, whom George Sand sees so clearly rising from the musician's magic caldron, — I suspect to be not so entirely a phantom of Meyerbeer's evoking, but that she owes

something of life and colour to the enthusiastic author's remembrance of her first representative; I mean the ill-starred Mademoiselle Falcon, the loved and the lost one of L'Académie.

She, indeed, was a person to haunt even a passing stranger. Though the seal of her race was upon her beauty, and it wore the expression of a Deborah or a Judith, rather than of a Melpomene, I have never seen any actress, who in look and gesture so well deserved the style and title of the Muse of Modern Tragedy. Large, dark, melancholy eyes, — finely-cut features, — a form, though slight, not meagre, — and, above all, an expressiveness of tone rarely to be found in voices of her register, which was a legitimate *soprano*, — the power of engaging interest by mere glance and step when first she presented herself, and of exciting the strongest emotions of pity, or terror, or suspense, by the passion she could develope in action — such were her gifts. Add to these the charms of her youth, the love borne to her by all her comrades; — and the loss of her voice, followed by the almost desperate efforts made by her to recover it, and her dis-

astrous final appearance when no force of will could torture destroyed Nature into even a momentary resuscitation,—make up one of those tragedies into which a fearful sum of wrecked hope and despair and anguish enters. Hers is a history, if all tales are true, too dark to be repeated, even with the honest purpose, not of pandering to an evil curiosity, but of pointing out the snares and pitfalls which lie in wait for the *artiste*, and of inquiring, for the sake of Art as well as of Humanity (the two are inseparable), if there be no protection against them, — no means for their avoidance?

In my poor judgment the music of "Les Huguenots" is rather the music of situation and passion, than of character. But while situation and passion are here treated with a certain originality, the thing is still done in accordance with the statutes of the French stage. There are none of those long solitary scenes in which the singer exhales the "*speranza*" or "*dolore*" or "*rabbia*" of an Italian opera. The greater part of the *solo* music takes the form of the couplet; the airs are nearly all of

them airs of narration, and not of sentiment. Even the song of Marguerite at the commencement of the second act, confessedly an *aria d'agilita* and not partaking of the above character, is so richly sustained by three *soprano* voices, as to receive an interest beyond any mere unaccompanied *solfeggio*, even should a singer as brilliant and daring as Madame Dorus-Gras execute it. On the other hand, the quantity of choral and dialogue music in "Les Huguenots" is enormous; for Meyerbeer, restrained by no pity for his executants, by no tradesmanlike wish to conciliate minor theatres, where three respectable singers at most are the amount of vocal force available, has inwrought in all his scenes very nearly as many secondary characters as do their spiriting in one of Shakspeare's historical plays. While these masses of sound, and the slight opportunity for display which it is in the power of any mere vocalizer to find in "Les Huguenots," remove it beyond the Italian pale, the stricter Germans reject it for the conventional *cut* of its airs, for the triteness of some of their leading ideas,

and for the utter disdain of continuity in working out his subjects shown by the master. The changes of *tempo*, as I have already observed, are innumerable and wanton: a few bars of some new movement being again and again thrust in, whenever it is necessary to bring back a *ritornello*, or to accomplish a close. That such breaking of bounds is not necessary to the development of the boldest inspirations, we have a proof in Beethoven's conduct of the vault-scene, in his "Fidelio," and in Weber's *finale* to the second act of "Euryanthe;" two of the strongest instances of dramatic effect extant. Artifice, in short, could hardly go further than in this opera, without entirely demolishing all the forms of Art, or becoming so unscrupulous as to avail herself of the means which vulgarity and slovenliness use to conceal want of science and want of invention.

But, though Meyerbeer may never found a school of composition, however many be the young hands who throw away the well-accustomed implements of science, and take up ill-fashioned tools of their own invention, in the

hopes of mastering his secret — for effect, there is nothing like "Les Huguenots." By effect, alone, no work is to be judged; but to produce an effect which shall move strongly, there must be genius, if there be not always truth. The manner in which the chorus is used throughout the full five acts of this musical tragedy distinguishes it from most operas I have ever studied. The plot of the drama is absolutely unfolded, not by recitatives and airs, but by the most elaborate concerted pieces. In the first act how delicious is the strain of gay and courtly *badinage* thrown off by the companions of Nevers, when he has withdrawn to receive the *incognita* who has solicited from His Coxcombry an interview; and they find a loop-hole of observation, through which Raoul, the only Huguenot of the party, discovers her to be the lady of his vows! How pressing are the phrases of offered service with which they beset the same bewildered Raoul, when they discover that Queen Marguerite of Navarre sends for him mysteriously by her own page! Animal spirits, gallantry, and courtiership are in every

bar of this music. The second act brings a change of mood. We are in the Queen's pleasaunce at Chenonceau: the Royal Lady herself is there, among her maidens, who now support her song — now abandon themselves to the languid and undulating strains which a summer noon, a smooth-shaven bank, and a basin of glassy waters suggest. The great and characteristic beauty of the Chorus of Bathers — I mean the voluptuously-flowing accompaniment of bassoons — is not, as many in England have guessed it to be, from only knowing it through Thalberg's *fantasia*, a piece of Thalberg's fancy; it is a genuine touch of Meyerbeer-*ism*. To this succeeds the tiptoe apparition of the arch and dainty conductors of the blind-folded Huguenot, who is led into the Queen's presence, to be made, at her bidding, the link of fellowship between Catholics and Protestants, by his being united with the fair unknown he has so long loved in secret. This chorus of the "Bandeau" is a perfect gem in its arch delicacy. Then we have the entrance of the whole court, in all the pride of its magnificence; then

the oath of allegiance. The latter, however, in spite of its being elaborated with all possible care, is still hardly so imposing as Rossini's simpler quartett in a similar situation in "Semiramide," though the Italian has pilfered its subject from the well-known romance "Cari pupille" of Blangini. After this the chorus breaks forth to utter the rage of the Court when Raoul — poisoned by that glance through the treacherous window into the closet of Nevers, and by the railleries of the young Catholic nobles — dashes away the hand so condescendingly offered to him, and refuses to complete the compact; while his servitor uplifts stoutly the old Lutheran hymn of joy at his master being delivered from the fellowship of the idolaters, and the arms of a Philistine Dalilah.

In the third act the chorus is yet more importantly called out. It has to determine scene and time; to paint characteristic groups widely different in class and colour. We have the Sunday evening of old Paris — the dance, the song, the holiday keepers, and the jugglers; the Protestant soldiers drinking to the valour of

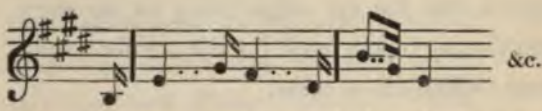
the stout Coligni, and the Catholic girls beseeching the Virgin to bless the bride. The bride is, alas! the luckless Valentine, who, in the moment of outraged pride, consents to marry Nevers, from whose courtesy she had that morning wrung, at the Queen's instance, an abnegation of their compact. Nothing can be more distinctly contrasted than the lusty troll of the Puritans over their cups from the meek litany of the Papist maidens at their prayers, as the one throng to the tavern, and the others move onward to the chapel: and the raciness and freshness of these and of the subsequent Curfew chant, show all the clearer for the re-introduction of the chivalresque spirit of the first act, in the challenge scene which succeeds. Here Raoul, and St. Bris, the father of the insulted Valentine, meet to exchange defiances, each with his two witnesses, and in the presence of Marcel, who would fain stop the combat. The scornful cartel, the quick rejoinder, the adjustment of the laws of fair quarrel, the gradual rising of gallant courage to an outbreak of animation and confidence so bril-

liant, that every voice, as it were, becomes an Excalibur of victory: the whole bold and courteous valour, in short, of the Bassompierres and the Condés of old France, flashes out with a power and a felicity and a nationality not to be resisted. But the quarrel is not thus to circumscribe itself within the bounds of a mortal encounter between two chafed and indignant men: the challenge is but the pebble thrown into a lake ready to be stirred — a watchword to call Catholics and Protestants to a *melée*. The double chorus immediately following this admirable septuor, where the two bands swarm upon the scene, is one of the most solid as well as effective pieces of writing which Meyerbeer has completed. The men uttering stormy menaces, the women with shrill and spiteful taunts exasperating their husbands and brothers to the strife, so poignantly attack, interrupt, overshout, and over-scold each other, that even while following the most meagre transcript of the music, Imagination can hardly but see an angry multitude ripe for one of those frightful tumults which begin among a handful of men, and end

in the spectacle of cities "flaming fast to death," and blood for water running down the streets. Suspense could be hardly carried further than at the moment where the appearance of Queen Marguerite abruptly enforces, for the moment, silence and order. Perhaps the extreme frivolity of the mere pageant-music which closes the act was purposely designed, that the eye might carry on the story, and the ear repose itself for the sterner excitements which are to come.

Of the chorus in the fourth act it is very difficult to speak, so colossal and overpowering is its effect. The unwilling bride is devoured by sorrow: her old and now desperate lover has forced himself into her presence, having too late learned the mistake which has wrecked their happiness. She will not hear him: — she has not time to bid him fly — steps approach — he is to be concealed. Scarcely has she closed the tapestry over his hiding-place — pale and breathless — when her severe and bigoted father enters, with other Catholic noblemen. They come to arrange the midnight massacre of

St. Bartholomew's eve, and to apportion to each his part — the gallant Nevers alone refusing to embrace the scheme, and for this being put in arrest by St. Bris, his father-in-law. The music, up to this point, is fairly dramatic; especially a dark and busy strain given to the leader of the plot; — though the leading idea of the concerted piece



be not of the newest; and though the composer, in place of working it out, has contented himself by a simple repetition of it at intervals. There is a slight pause after Nevers is withdrawn. Three monks enter, pale, ruthless, solemn; the angels of Doom pronouncing words that glow like the solemn fire of a sacrifice, or anathemas that chill the very blood to hear. Only Handel has surpassed the majesty of their chant, which a contemporary critic imaginatively called "a march over the ashes of their heretic enemies;" as in its awful and stately progress it sweeps along with it the

voices of all the hearers, and bears them forward by a climax as inevitable as the roaring haste of a river nearing a cataract, till the last awful burst of sanguinary enthusiasm, — the last terrible hymn of the ministers of Superstition, who see Heaven in the mounting fire and the gleaming sword. The strain of exultation drops suddenly into the ghastly whispers of secrecy and midnight. It is ended. They are gone to accomplish the vow. What matter, so that a picture like this be called up, if, to produce the last strongest emotion, the composer has but employed the inexpressive theme I have noted, in thrilling unison and with a change of accompaniment? What matter if, for once, skill take the place of idea, so but the result be that breathless excitement to remember which makes the heart throb and the hand tremble?

After such a chorus, what more was possible? The act had still to be finished — and finished by a duet. Never was a composer so taxed with a Pelion's weight of anti-climax as Meyerbeer with the necessity, after such a stu-

pendous effort of combination, of continuing the scene with merely a pair of interlocutors. Nothing but the mightiest dramatic passion could sustain it: and of such character is the interview which follows. The lady convulsed with terror for her unbidden guest's safety, is unable to endure his flight, when that flight must lead him to certain massacre;—the lover is distracted between willingness to remain at her feet and thoughts of his brethren in faith perishing. I cannot altogether take part with those who find this scene shameful. Though long-hoarded Love bursts out, it is forced into utterance by the overmastering pressure of peril and terror; and scarcely has the ear drunk in the momentary ecstasy of Raoul, on hearing the confession that escapes from Valentine in the delirium of eagerness to retain him, when the muffled funereal clanging of the tocsin announces that the slaughter has begun, and that the Huguenot is a craven, who will sigh away his soul when his people are in such jeopardy. The terrible struggle which follows, if filled out with mere language, as would be necessary were it con-

ducted in words alone, must degenerate into melodrame; but to such music as sweeps along with it, the hurricane of passion may be spoken, without the excess of its frenzy giving a shock to the senses. A great master of harmonies and combinations, availing himself of the vagueness of the impressions produced by sounds as compared with those of words, can venture comparatively further than the Poet, and clothe the meagre skeleton of ejaculations and broken sighs with a fulness and a poetry not to be attained in rhyme, without pushing emotion to agony, or action to distortion. If what I have hazarded contain any amount of truth, here is strong ground on which the vigorous creator of the tragic opera may take his stand, dressing the most terrible passion in forms of beauty, and uttering it in symbol — not speech — by the aid of a spirit of living fire spreading wider and soaring higher than any one speaking in a precise form of measured words can do.

The end of the tale is very near. Pass the brief though brilliant ball scene at the opening of the fifth act, with its fine minuet; introduced,

it may be divined, merely by way of relief, and broken off remorselessly by the tidings of the terrible night without. We are now before a gloomy church in the streets of Paris, which are crowded by helpless, terrified widows and orphans, who fly to the altar to pray that Murder find them not out also, or that their deaths may be short. Here comes the young bride widowed — Nevers, that gallant nobleman, her husband, having been numbered as a first victim of massacre; here comes her cavalier, worn, haggard, exhausted, having faced Death, and seen his work, till life has ceased to have any price. Here, too, comes the old serving-man, wounded, but as resolved of spirit as when he first thundered out his "dear psalm tune" at the Moabitish banquet. From within the church is heard the sad and melancholy swell of that same familiar Lutheran hymn; now weak and faltering, for but women and children remain to sing it. There is nothing but death to come; and Valentine is contented to die, — and Raoul, so but he die with her. Kneeling, as it were, upon the edge of the grave,

the two pronounce vows of trust and confidence; while the stern old Marcel, their faithful friend stands betwixt them, jealous that no lingering earthly love may intrude itself, and with a voice as from the depths of the tomb, bidding them pray for a reunion in heaven. Few and simple are the notes of this passage — which, according to Meyerbeer's manner of producing effect, is thrice repeated in an unchanged form. Once more the doleful psalm rises behind the scenes. Without, too, rises another sound, — the march of the men of blood — a ferocious sanguinary strain: their feet are swift as their words are furious, and their aim true. It moves towards the church. A few last feeble notes of supplication — a moment's skirmish — a moment's gleam through the high windows — and all is silence. The martyr three are left; but it is not to despair, still less to entreat mercy. The sound of many harpings that bursts from the orchestra introduces the triumphant "Amen" of Faith with a crown of life in view, and sustained by the revelation of a future, in which there is only bless-

edness. Here, again, the *motivo* is not extraordinary, nor is its vocal treatment rare; but, by some unfelt spell, the height of the situation is maintained; the strain of exalted triumph rolls on, while peals of the quick and ferocious march coming rapidly nearer announce the return of the executioners. Then, for the last time, Valentine, Raoul, and Marcel, uplifting in sublime unison the old Lutheran tune, — once more a Hosanna of Hope and Triumph, — march forward hand in hand to meet their fate. Here are now no idle repetitions for the sake of musical form — here is no dallying with the terror of the final close: one instant more — one last high strain of that hymn drowning the shouts of the blood-stained rabble — a sound of fire-arms — and the whole is consummated!

I have been forced, by the remembrance of these last scenes, out of the line I had traced for myself, — namely, a mere intimation of certain choral effects, which occur in no other operatic work so strikingly as in "Les Huguenots." I have found myself — every note of the music

ringing in my ears as if I was listening to Falcon, Nourrit, and Levasseur — writing as of some real event which I had seen and heard, and not a mere dramatic presentment in a form which some still satirize as too absurdly conventional to be capable of producing the slightest deep emotion. It is too late after such a dream to come back with the lantern-light of small speculation to measure details, and examine peculiarities of structure. How far more gladly than describe such music, would I make Memory play it in the ears of my friend the reader! Little as has been accomplished in this faithful transcript of impressions, I shall be content if any desire be awakened among those who know it not, or have heard it slighted, to study a composition in effect so entirely unapproached as "Les Huguenots." But it should be seen and heard in France; and I can hardly believe that the severest purist, the most earnest admirer of the serener tranquillities of the old school, could *receive* it, (and at least three hearings are necessary to its reception,) and not think a musical pilgrimage to Paris richly requited.

MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

GERMANY.

THE BRUNSWICK FESTIVAL IN 1839.

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THE BRUNSWICK FESTIVAL.

CHAPTER I.

THE JOURNEY AND THE REHEARSAL.

Hamburg to Haarburg. — Steam-boat Groups.— German Good Nature. — Haarburg to Soltau. — Bookcase at Soltau. — Celle. — Brunswick. — Its picturesque Features. — The Blauen Engel. — The Egydien Kirche. — Beethoven's Symphony in C minor. — A Word to our own Festival Committees. — Diligence of the Orchestra. — Dr. Mendelssohn Bartholdy. — A Sketch (not personal). — Care in Rehearsal.

I AM not such a hardened traveller as to have ceased to find the first half hour of a solitary journey in a strange country a trifle dreary. If even, moreover, the banks of the Elbe betwixt Hamburg and Haarburg rivalled those of the

same river above Dresden in beauty and variety, they must have looked dismal on the fourth of September, 1839, after a night's storm, which had scattered all the first yellow leaves of the linden trees on the Jungfernstieg, and under clouds hanging low, which presently discharged themselves in a dense chill rain. The deck of the steamer was made untenable by a drove of horses, on their way from the Lubeck fair to Italy; the little close cabin reeked with tobacco-smoke. I had before me a day and a night's journey through this forbidding weather — Autumn threatening to be as severe in Hanover as Lord Eglintoun found it at Castle Montgomerie — and across the dreariest country in the world, with only Patience and Pantomime to stand my purveyors and interpreters. "What a fool have I been," said I, wistfully calling to mind my own easy chair at home, "ever to think of this Musical Festival at Brunswick!"

But the people of North Germany have a good-natured way with them, which must put the most pertinacious feelings of strangeness and solitude to flight in a wonderfully short

time. When the tobacco wreaths parted in the cabin, a group or two was revealed worth studying. One was made up of a youth and two damsels; the latter travelling through that raw atmosphere with their bare arms undefended, save by the long brown kid gloves of our great-grandmothers — good-humoured sprightly girls, blessed by Heaven with miscellaneous appetites. Their cavalier, who was making love to one or both of them, was yet more noticeable: his gay and daintily-braided tobacco-pouch slung round his neck; his exuberant travelling cap; his waistcoat, which had been of many colours; his trowsers, shapeless enough to make a Pelham inquire if *schneider* be indeed a German word; his huge square seal-ring on not the cleanest of forefingers — not to forget the thousand smirks and smiles and fondlings lavished on the objects of his care — composed a whole characteristic and worthy of note, though insignificant when compared with others of his sex and age I afterwards encountered. I watched, too, with interest of a different quality, a party of fair and stately girls

with their mother, all in deep mourning, and attended by a young gentleman, whose good French and better manners must belong, I was sure, — and I proved to be right, — to a good name also. Then, further to make me feel at home, my travelling difficulties were presently brought to an end in the best of all possible fashions, by my happy fortune in lighting upon an excellent and sociable Strasburgher, who, like myself, wished to avoid the slow and circuitous route of the public conveyance by Lunenburg, and, being bound for Hanover, proposed that we should join company in a *wagon*, and post as far as Celle, or within two or three stages of my destination.

The day kept the promise of the morning, and the gray spongy sky and the incessant rain made the damp and barren moors between Haarburg and Celle appear doubly desolate. The very heather looked starved and wretched; the trees as if they had hardly the heart to grow; the few people, too, we encountered were uncouth and squalid. We were detained early in the last stage before reaching Soltau by the

loss of a horse's shoe; and, while waiting for the postillion's return, whom we had sent back to the last posthouse, forth issued from a miserable sod-hut by the wayside, a couple of girls, hooting and screaming, as unkempt, as dirty, as haggard, as were ever two savages — the long loops of black riband which hung from the country caps they wore streaming wildly in the wind. A more unlovely pair never danced round a caldron. Evening was closing in when we reached Soltau. Here that domestic curse, "a great wash" of an enormous stock of linen, busily directed by the daisy-faced landlady, was filling the post-house with soapy steam, — no pleasant atmosphere to breathe on such an afternoon. To crown all, the Maritornes in attendance, an ill-grown slip-shod girl, was entirely driven to her wits' end by the arrival of the young Count and the ladies whom I had admired in the morning. While she clattered to and fro, retarding, instead of preparing, dinner, I was struck by a neat satin-wood bookcase, at the end of the room; and, on examination, was surprised to find it contain a

handsomely bound collection, not merely of the best German classics, — Göthe, Schiller, Herder, Jean Paul, Novalis, and even Schelling, — but our own Byron, Shakspeare, Irving, in their original English, and, I doubt not, Bulwer, for he is every where in Germany. I was oddly reminded of home, too, by coarse prints of the three Georges of England and Queen Charlotte, hanging on the walls, and one or two such large engravings of the Death of Nelson and of the encounters between the British and the French fleets, as still ornament the guest-chambers of our country houses. But a cookery book would have been more to the purpose than these refinements, as far as we were concerned. When, at last, our dinner made its appearance, the soup might have been furnished by the wash-tub, and the *piece de resistance* proved to be a block of pork, terribly salted, and liberally larded, with preserved cherries to help it down — a dish defying even appetites which had been quickened by that penurious thing, a German inn breakfast, and a long raw morning spent on the wastes of Hanover.

It was not till long after midnight that we rattled into Celle, the head-quarters (so the guide-books say) of the pure German language. The town was dead asleep; not a solitary roamer in the streets; not one of those winking tapers in a high window, which, almost at any hour of night, at once tantalise the traveller passing through an English town, and, by sending his fancy to the vigil of nurse by a sick bed, or of sedulous student over his books, or of hard-pressed operative compelled to curtail the period of natural rest, connect him, as it were, with the world within its walls. But there was an air of formal and faded stateliness in what I could see of the streets of Celle, and in the large lofty chambers and wide staircase of the hotel, which we at last succeeded in forcing open, that, tired as I was, interested me, and called up visions of phlegmatic Electors and stiff Electresses on their progresses and parades, such as may be found painted in Dr. Moore's travels. I did not, however, stay to try whether such august scenes and personages would visit my dreams;

for, after extorting a cup of coffee from the blinking waiter, though sorry to shake hands and part from my Strasburg friend, I was glad to be shut up again in my *wagon*, and to be dozing and jolting my way towards Brunswick. Thanks to the excellent posting regulations adopted throughout the whole of North Germany, a child of five years old who knew not a word of the language might cross the country from Hamburg to Cologne with small risk of being cheated, and with the certainty of not being delayed.

We reached Brunswick by half-past eight in the morning. A brighter, more encouraging day never dawned; the sun glittered on the spotlessly bright window panes of that ancient comfortable town, which was already astir with preparations for the Festival. I had often fancied such a collection of picturesque old buildings nodding to each other across the narrow crooked streets, some of them adorned with quaint carvings; here, a small open space adorned with a fountain or a fine old tree darkening with its green luxuriance the face

of some dwelling-house; there, a lofty church, patched and time-stained, with fragments of rich architecture wrought into its walls; but I had never seen any thing of the kind before. Hence it is, I suppose, on the strength of first impression, that I shall all my long life consider that Brunswick has been somewhat unfairly overlooked by tourists, sketchers, and the compilers of guide-books. My travelling friend had recommended me to take up my quarters at the Blauen Engel; and thither I drove accordingly. There are larger hotels in the town — there can be none in any town more civilly kept. The house was clean and cheerful — the attendance excellent. While I was alighting, the waiter apologized for the landlord, who was gone to the rehearsal of "Paulus:" and while setting on the table the capital coffee, bread, and eggs, which, truth to say, I needed, made me so good naturedly *au fait* in all the politics of the "Musik-Feste," that we became the best friends in the world. By the time my pen and ink were unpacked, I felt as if I had been in Brunswick a week at the very least.

I do not add in a grumbling spirit, that it requires North German heartiness to make up for the discomforts of North German lodgement, — to compensate for the box, by way of bed, in which the victim is expected to sleep, — for the ball of feathers, which *will not* cover him, in lieu of sheets, blankets, and counterpane, — for the noisy uncarpeted floor, and the grievously scanty provision of water in his pie-dish and phial — not basin and jug: — but truth is truth.

A walk after breakfast increased my admiration for the cleanliness and quaintly picturesque architecture I have described. To be sure, the first old town in Germany is much like the first figure one eyes when first setting foot on Calais pier, who looks inviting and pleasant, be she even a *poissarde*, coarse, and old, and wrinkled. But, such charity apart, there are beautiful things in Brunswick: among others, a richly-decorated Rathhaus, with those corrupt ornaments, and that heavy pyramidal gable, which seem to be proper to buildings of its order: a few cloister-like arches in the

opposite corner of the place where it stands of the richest Gothic; and close to the Dom-Kirche, where Caroline of England lies buried, a bronze lion, of Byzantine antiquity. The human beings, too, who looked out at the shop doors, or streamed along the streets, in *such* equipages! were singularly comely and prosperous-looking. A few hours' further experience convinced me of their civility and hospitality to strangers. In all that concerned the official arrangements of the Festival, in a desire to accommodate all classes, from the Duke down to his meanest subject, and in patient attention to the comfort of the most obscure stranger, I must insist that the gentlemen of the committee were a model, which might with advantage be imitated at our own provincial entertainments of a similar kind, where a shred of white ribbon at the button-hole, and a wand in the hand, are too often signs that the wearer is licensed to be discourteous, neglectful, and overbearing.

I was lying in the sunshine, after the one o'clock *table d'hôte*, feverish and sleepy, lazily

calling up past festivals and distant faces, when the thread of my musings was cut short by the entrance of a clean civil little boy, with a message from Dr. Mendelssohn, who was then in the Egydien Kirche, superintending the rehearsal. We were there ere I was well awake. The church is but the fragment of a large Gothic building, which has been sorely despoiled of much of its old ornaments by time or violence; and its one good point — height, renders it ineligible for musical purposes. Even then, though it was late in the afternoon, and the rehearsal had been going on with small intermission since the morning, it was three parts full. I arrived in the midst of Beethoven's C minor symphony, just a few bars before the commencement of its glorious final march, which has a strength and a triumph potent enough almost to raise the dead! Had I desired a moment of the strongest possible sensation on first making acquaintance with a German orchestra, it could not have been more completely granted.

The performance fell far short of what it would have been by Dr. Mendelssohn's own band at

Leipsic. At these German, as at our English musical festivals, the orchestra is compounded of unequal materials, being assisted by many persons unused to practise together. Here, too, it was largely amateur. But the effect of the music was nevertheless overcoming! It seems like a heresy to say it, — but if it be true, as Schindler asserts in his recent memoir, that Beethoven did not intend his symphonies to be performed on a large scale, and conceived that the rendering of their finest effects, under such circumstances, was impossible, — then, the master hardly was aware of the extent to which his own ideas were capable of development, or of the majesty they might assume. And thus, too, may Handel never, even in idea, have heard his own "Hallelujah," or the yet more matchless series of choruses in his "Israel." The glory of the symphony was heightened by the lofty arches and long-drawn aisles through which it resounded; and when the thrill and the mustering of blood to the heart, which so few things excite when early youth is passed, had subsided, I could not but wistfully ask

myself, why such noble works are not also selected to form a part of the morning performances at our Musical Festivals, instead of being thrust into the schemes of Concerts five hours long, when all the provincial world is waiting to hear the newest Italian airs and cadences from the Pasta or the Persiani of the hour.

This proposal to introduce great orchestral music into sacred performances, will sound strange to many, — perhaps unholy to some; but its wisdom is worth examining. There are works by all the great masters, so decidedly secular in tone, as to jar unpleasantly upon the mind on such occasions; and perhaps the only three of Beethoven's symphonies eligible would be — the one mentioned, the *Eroica*, with its grave and holy "Funeral March," and the Choral Symphony. The choice, again, would, in a great measure, depend upon the manner of the composition. Some of Beethoven's symphonies, besides being too secular in character, are too delicate in detail, to bear being rendered by a very large orchestra, in

which, to balance the stringed instruments, the wind-instruments would have to be doubled. That the master, in composing, had an eye to such gradation, may be clearly seen, on comparing, for instance, his overture to "Leonora," with that in C major, Op. 124., the "Fest. Overture," which, being obviously written for an enormous band, has never been properly heard in England, and hence is all but unknown. My remark must be taken in its larger sense of a protest against exclusiveness, the following out of which is, of course, subject to technical considerations. As regards the profanity of mere instrumental music, as opposed to the sacredness of the "Messiah," or of Spohr's "Last Judgment," let no one deceive himself. Our Musical Festivals are not direct acts of devotion because they are performances of holy words set to befitting music, and often held in churches. There are few that defend them on such grounds who would not start from the notion that they were worshipping, when they sit in silence before the "Madonna di San Sisto" of the Dresden Gallery, or when

they enter the stately cathedral at Antwerp to admire the great pictures Rubens has left there. And yet the two acts are precisely identical in character. It is not the mere adoption of the text of scripture by the musician, — it is not the selection of saints and angels by the painter, that make their works operate with a hallowing influence upon our vexed and worldly spirits. It is that the high thoughts which the artist has brought to his task awaken in us those better and more spiritual aspirings, which are too often stifled in the heavy sleep of self-indulgence, or the harsh tumult of money-getting, or the dissipating frivolity of society. "Music," says a far abler writer than I, "is religious, not merely by being linked to words expressive of supplication or praise, or enumerating the attributes of the Deity, and declaring the homage which devotion renders to those attributes, — but when its strains are felt as an agency acting upon the soul through the sense; when it makes the nerves thrill, when it touches, purifies, and elevates the mind; when it becomes over us a power and an influence

in which God seems to communicate with man, as he does through the harmonies of Nature."

To speak a little more technically of the interpretation of one of the sublimest strains of poetry in instrumental music: — in performing Beethoven's symphony, the orchestra, I have said, was, perhaps, hardly in its consentaneous expression what it might have been. But the earnestness and anxiety of its members, who betook themselves to their task — one heedless if he see-sawed over his violoncello as oddly as Dr. Johnson — another, if he rasped the very hair off his head — a third, if, like the bassoon player in "Bracebridge Hall," he "blew his face to a point," — made a sight at once new and, though amusing, calculated to disarm ridicule. Indeed, that sense of the whimsical and grotesque, which is so invaluable as a travelling companion to solitary persons, of necessity becomes far less sardonic in Germany than elsewhere. Every eye was fixed fast upon the conductor, with a submissiveness and an admiration which must have had their reciprocal effect, in inspiring him to go through

his fatiguing duties without flagging or impatience: and Dr. Mendelssohn's conducting, though easy in appearance, and, therefore, any thing but distracting to the eye, is about the strictest in spirit of any I have ever witnessed, that of Moscheles alone excepted.

After the symphony, a weak and tame *contralto* singer, with a profusion of fair ringlets, went through the delicious *arioso* in "St. Paul," "But the Lord is mindful of his own:" after which the conductor, till then personally a stranger, came down to me, and gave me a friendly welcome to Germany. There is much temptation when distinguished persons like himself are in question, to trench upon the ground of private intercourse, and to gratify the public by filling up the outline it is already familiar with, by exhibiting in detail one genially gifted with many talents besides that to which his life has been devoted, exercising an indulgent and flattering kindness, which it were a shame not to acknowledge. But — to name no higher motive — I mean to travel again; and will therefore only tell as much as any of the

hundreds who fixed their eyes upon the composer in the Egydien Kirche could tell also.

None of the portraits of Dr. Mendelssohn do his face justice. There is, indeed, urgent need of some new Titian or Vandyke to perpetuate the great musicians, who rarely meet with better treatment than such as Dantan can afford in his clever but superficial busts. As far as regards the composer of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," some of the portraits extant give the outline, and the settled serious expression of his face in repose; but none of them that play of the eye, shifting from poetical enthusiasm to poetical humour, which lights up his countenance when he speaks. I have never seen features upon which archness and mirth seemed more at home; and it is easy to believe what those who know Dr. Mendelssohn best predict—namely, that whenever he chooses to write his opera, he may possibly develop in it a vivacity of comic inspiration, at least as remarkable as the breadth and gravity (not heaviness) of idea which characterise his serious works.

The rehearsal proceeded: a psalm of Schneider's was gone through—the "Hallelujah chorus" from the Messiah—and Weber's Jubilee Overture; all with care and intelligence. That painful conviction, that nine tenths of the orchestra feels itself employed in manufacturing music, which is so constantly forced upon the listener at English rehearsals, could never be entertained here for one single moment. There are certain proverbs which are kept alive with us by their absurdity; and the saying that "a reformed rake makes the best husband," is not, in Manners, a more fatal fallacy than, in Music, the equally common adage, that "the worst rehearsal makes the best performance." If this be translated into common-sense, what else can it mean, than that, having been more than usually indifferent and insubordinate at a trial, the English orchestral player is compelled at a full performance to fulfil his duties with that extra measure of zeal and attention which the German musician finds it his pleasure to bring to bear upon all he does,—whether going through the flimsy and worn-out symphony to one of

Bellini's *cavatinas*, or trying an intricate and not engaging slow movement by Lachner or Lindpaintner?

The audience remained attentive and numerous till the last chord; and then dispersed in happy anticipation of the morrow — Dr. Mendelssohn, to be serenaded by some of the young men of the town with some of the part-songs, which make up as peculiar a feature in German music as our glees at home. Of these in another time and place.

CHAP. II.

FIRST DAY.

THE ORATORIO. — THE DINNER.

Early Hours in Brunswick. — Primitive Equipages. — A Retrospect of a Dublin Festival with Paganini. — Contrasts in Costume. — A Word upon Costumes at Home. — Honours to Dr. Mendelssohn. — The Popularity of the "St. Paul" compared with that of "The Last Judgment." — Its Freedom from Manner, — Its dramatic Effects, — Its four great Songs. — The Performance compared with English Performances. — The Singers. — Madame Fischer-Achten, — Herr Fischer, — Herr Schmetzer. — The Reception of "St. Paul." — German and English Modesty. — The Dinner. — The Decorations. — Impudent Englishman. — The Cookery. — The Musical Honours. — "Dankes-Gruſs." — A straightforward Dialogue. — The Climax and Close of the Feast.

Poor —— used to say, that people who "rose betimes," as the proverb hath it, might be known for the rest of the day by the air of spiritual pride they thought themselves entitled to assume. The inhabitants of Brunswick richly earned the right of being thus vainglorious on the first morning of their Festival. By six

o'clock, A.M., there was no possibility of further sleep. Not only was the entire "Blue Angel" stirring and clamorous for its breakfast; the whole town was blithely alive. In every room of the opposite four-story house, which seemed nodding into my little light chamber, the work of adorning was busily going on: in one window, the first flourish of the razor; in another, the last shoulder-knot pinned on, or the sash tied. But neither gentlemen nor ladies denied themselves the pleasure of throwing wide the casements, and leaning out into the fresh autumnal sunshine, as often as the frequent sound of creaking springs, jingling wheels, the leisurely trot of horses, or the eager bawling of their drivers announced that another cargo of pleasurers was coming in to enjoy or assist in the execution of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul."

Certainly, these equipages were things to admire at. The old Irish post-chaise, out of which, upon its being rolled from the coach-house, three hens flew, leaving an egg behind them, would have figured as a vehicle of worship among some of the machines which deposited

their full freight beneath my windows. German *wagons* of an older date than the Electors and Electresses I did *not* see at Celle — horses reminding one of Mrs. Butler's picture of the Pennsylvanian charger, more "like an old hair trunk" worn bare than a creature to mount or to drive — harness cracked with neglect and brown with age — Jehus in liveries as far from our notions of what is neat and befitting as the Lord Edfort or *Sir* Hudlow of the French Opera Comique is from the real John Bull; — with cockades, top-boots, laced hats, livery coats, earrings, and heterogeneously coloured cotton handkerchiefs stuck on as each individual wearer judged best: — I shall never forget the scene, so new, so bustling, so cheerful. A temporary lull took place between seven and eight, when the world might be supposed to be at breakfast; by nine, every one was streaming towards the Egydien Kirche, which, even at that hour, was three parts full.

I have assisted at many Musical Festivals at home; in particular, I remember, as curious and characteristic, the Dublin meeting held in

the year 1831. The morning performances of this took place in the artificially-lighted theatre, the boxes of which were filled with a display of beauty I have never seen equalled, and the galleries overflowed with a dirty, half-clad audience, which, after its peculiar fashion, made no scruple of cracking jokes at the performers as they presented themselves. I remember their shrieks of delight when Paganini the wizard glided from the cloak which, like a cloud, enveloped him at the side scenes, to play his *rondo colla campanella* between the acts of the concert; and how, for a more distinct view of his wizard figure, the people compelled him to mount the pianoforte — a proceeding so much to their tastes, that on Braham coming next to sing (O, shame!) "The Bay of Biscay," they insisted upon his doing the same, and all but exacted a similar compliance from gentle Madame Stockhausen in her turn. *That* was a scene as lively, as full of contrast, as the English heart could desire. Yet more gaily various as a sight was the audience in the Egydien Kirche at Brunswick. Elegantly dressed girls in the transparent

and gay toilettes of an English ball-room, might be seen, sitting side by side with the gipsy-coloured, hard-handed peasant-women of the district, whose black caps, by the way,—gracefully displaying the head and picturesquely decorated with pendant streamers of ribbon,—are quite worth the attention of any lady who has beauty or courage enough to resolve upon a new mode. Here, again, was a comely youth, tight-laced in his neat uniform, and every hair of his moustache trimmed and trained to an agony of perfection, squeezed up against a dirty, savage, half-naked student;—half-naked, I may say, without exaggeration, when I remember one figure, with his long, wild hair half way down his back, and his velveteen coat, which, confined at the waist with one solitary button, made it evident, beyond the possibility of mistake, that neither waistcoat nor shirt was underneath. The orchestra, on the other hand, had an appearance of uniformity we rarely see. The lady-singers, though all serving gratuitously, both amateurs and theatrical artists, had wisely agreed to merge all individual fancies in an

unexpensive, but delicate and pretty uniform of white, with a large nosegay by way of ornament.* The whole assembly of orchestra and audience, thus heterogeneously composed, was cemented by one sympathetic desire to honour Mendelssohn; and this was as strongly, if not as vivaciously expressed, as the curiosity to have out "the man who played on the one string" testified by the boys and girls of the Dublin

* Our sturdy national disposition to resist the slightest control in matters of taste — the same which makes the suburbs of our towns so prettily varied, and their street-architecture so incongruous and ineffective — the same which militates among many other causes against the formation of a thoroughly good orchestra from English materials, — tells oddly, on occasions like these, in this same matter of costume. I remember, at the last rehearsal of "Acis and Galatea," given by one of our provincial choral societies, overhearing one young lady of the choir, while discussing the delicate matter of her *coiffure*, say to her neighbour, "Ringlets is out; I shall go Fanny Kemble-wise." When the evening arrived, the Galatea, who was terribly thin and spectacled, and fifty or thereabouts, presented herself in a triumphant scarlet hat; only one among a group of figures similarly ridiculous, whose ill-considered and not-to-be-overruled tawdriness turned a really fine performance (I have never heard the chorus "Wretched lovers" so well sung before or since), into a broad farce.

gallery. All eyes waited his — not the Duke's — coming. His conductor's desk was wreathed with a fresh garland of flowers; — upon it, beside the score of his oratorio, was laid another more delicate bouquet ready for his use, and if I mistake not, for his refreshment, a paper cornucopia of those dainties in which every good German housewife is so skilful. We should laugh at these *petits soins* in London; — at Brunswick they were pretty, because hearty and natural.

Precisely at ten o'clock the performance began. I had heard the oratorio of "St. Paul" two or three times before, but never so thoroughly enjoyed it. There was much, of course, in time, place, and sympathy. What caviller against German crudity and mysticism could have resisted the "Euryanthe" conducted by Weber at Vienna? — and I should feel small patience with the most conscientious and intellectual contemner of Italian meretriciousness who at Venice could remain cold to the "Semiramide" of Rossini, performed under the auspices of *Il Maestro* himself! But, allowing for these in-

fluences as largely as may be required, there is little modern music which gains so much with every subsequent hearing as that of the "St. Paul." It has one element of permanence as well as of progression, simplicity of treatment as well as elevation of idea. The composer has refrained from thrusting himself upon his subject at the expense of some of those individualities, which, in the first instance, enchant by surprising, though ere long they become palling as mannerisms. How — to give an instance — was all England at first fascinated by the "Last Judgment" of Spohr when it was first imported! We thought it impossible ever to be tired of the composer's peculiar and rich harmonies, of his exquisitely symmetrical constructions. How were we enthralled by the quartett with chorus at the end of the first part; in the second, by the pathetic duet, "Forsake me not," and by the chorus "Destroyed is Babylon," with that holy burial-strain, "Blest are the departed," which succeeds it, — Spohr's finest specimen of dramatic contrast. Yet, what has now become of all

these seductions? Familiarity with the master has shown us the spell of them exercised indiscriminately, and with little variation, in every form of composition; and, save by a few who "on honey-dew have fed," till they have been incapable of digesting any food without such a cloying condiment, Spohr runs an unfair chance of being as extravagantly undervalued as he was, ten years ago, extravagantly overpraised.

The reception of the "St. Paul" has been altogether different. From that musical Ultima Thule, the English provinces, on the one hand, — taking in, by the way, an English palace*, where a chorus was selected by royal dilettantism to figure between Ricci and Rossini's opera pieces, — to Vienna on the other, the public of which is accused by good Herr von Raumer of being wholly delivered over to "Italian sing-song," its fame has spread and deepened, — whether to take permanent root or not let the Sybils declare. But it has good chance on its side, so far as avails a composer's total avoidance of all the modes and manners of the hour, carried

* At Her Majesty's private concert last spring.

even to the point of a Quakerish aversion of those furbelows and phylacteries of ornament which change at the caprice of every new generation of singers. Yet, in spite of Mendelssohn's disregard of all these ephemeral props and decorations, how forcible in their simple truth are its effects! How thrillingly expressed, by the multiplication of treble voices and wind instruments, is the celestial apparition in the scene of Saul's conversion! How ferociously real are the cries of the multitude at the stoning of St. Stephen! How melodious, in the sweet holiness of consolation, is the funeral chorus, "O happy and blest are they," when the protomartyr is laid in his grave! There is a little design in *chiaro-scuro* by Martin, of a burial in a cavern, — if I recollect right, of Sarah in the cave of Macpelah, — the deep shadows and struggling lights of which, around the group of mourners bending reverentially over the dust of the departed, never fail to come back to me upon the deliciously undulating accompaniment, and the grave but soothing chaunt of the voices of that chorus. Nor less dramatically has

the composer thrown himself into the hymn of adoration given to the heathen, when, astounded by the miraculous powers of the Apostles, "they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercurius; and the Priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people." The frieze of some Grecian temple, with its choral dancers, and its flower-decked altar, is not further in character from some "Pieta," or martyrdom of Christian art, than the delicious strain, "O be gracious, ye immortals," from the funeral anthem just mentioned, or from that serenely exulting strain of hope, "How lovely are the messengers!"

I am not pretending to analyse the "St. Paul;" but, in adverting to some of its claims on the future, the scope it gives to the principal singers must not be forgotten. Though it afford less opportunity for separate display than some of Handel's oratorios, — not than his best, "Israel in Egypt," — or than Haydn's "Creation," — it still contains a song of the very highest order, for each voice of the vocal

quartett. Need I enumerate for the *soprano*, the song "Jerusalem;" for the *contralto*, that delicious *arioso*, "But the Lord is mindful of his own;" for the *basso* the scene, "O God, have mercy upon me;"—and for the tenor the *cantabile* "Be thou faithful unto death!" than which Handel himself has hardly left us a tenor air deeper or more earnest in its expressiveness? Every song, moreover, is not only tempting to declaim, but agreeable to sing. Here and there, in some contemporary works there may be a more startling point of choral force than any occurring in the "St. Paul;" but, if these songs be taken as a group, it may be questioned whether any thing has been produced equal to it since the days of the still unapproached "Messiah."

In some respects the performance of "St. Paul" must have satisfied its author, were he even so ultra sensitive as ——, who, it is said, has never endured to witness a single representation of any one of his many plays. The chorus was extremely good, clear in the delivery of its tone, and its precision to be inferred

from the tremendous sibilation on certain words, to an amount of *ssssss-sforzando*, which I have never remarked at home, even in the performance of the choruses, "For unto *us* a child is born," or, "From the cen*s*er,"— both favourites with English chorus singers, but full of the dangerous sound. It was a great relief to be delivered from male counter-tenors, to which no use or tradition will ever reconcile my ear; it was a great triumph to one who has always denounced that voice as unnatural and offensive, to find that the quartett gained by the substitution of *contralti*, which indeed are stronger upon the characteristic notes — the deepest — of their part, while the highest are attained without that nasality and effort which all men (Rubini perhaps excepted) must use, when in *falsetto* approaching the *soprano* register. But the absence of an organ to support and blend the voices, was as great a loss, as the substitution just praised was a gain. In the fugue at the opening of the second part, and in most of the choruses, this was sadly felt. It is one of the few English indispensables which the Germans would do well to naturalize, and for the want

of which, in grand sacred music, not even the superiority of their orchestras, or the heartiness of zeal, such as characterised every chord of the Brunswick chorus, can altogether satisfactorily compensate.

The solo exhibitions were, as usual, the least admirable part of the performance. Yet, here, too, were observable a steadiness and a self-sacrifice eminently commendable to English imitation. No drawling of the time, — no neglect of speaking the text, — no long-drawn displays of a single note esteemed particularly exquisite in its height or depth; — no cadences or trills whatsoever: indeed my ear sometimes missed the shake, which, judiciously applied, gives a grace without frivolity to all sacred music. But the singers, if more correct, were harder, and less finished, than ours. Madame Fischer-Achten threw even less feeling into the tones of her clear and satisfactory *soprano* voice, than Miss —— is used to do. The principal *contralto*, as I have already said, was weak and tame, making nothing of her song whatsoever. Still drier and less expressive was Herr Fischer, the

bass singer of the Oratorio. I was defending him on the score of his artist-like simplicity and exactness, to a German musical friend of mine who had heard the "St. Paul" in England, and who answered — "Yes, but I would willingly compound with any of your English flourishes, if he would but give the song as much feeling and elevation as Phillips!" What could be urged in answer? If the taste of the Germans have of late unduly taken the direction of "Italian sing-song," (to adopt Von Raumer's contemptuous appellation,) one cause may be, a want among their home artists of southern vocal cultivation, as well as a predilection for southern roulades and *cantilenas*. Even good Herr Schmetzer, the tenor, the best of the party, and whose fine voice was shown to great advantage by the music, was coarse and unfinished in comparison with more than one of our own tenors, Braham being put out of the question. With every disposition to distrust my own ears, and not to listen pedantically because I listened carefully, I could not but feel how large and grave was the entire deficiency. And yet I was told,

upon authority not to be questioned, that the great songs of the "St. Paul" had not hitherto been better executed in Germany.

I was a little disappointed with the audience. Though noiselessly attentive, it was not quite as warm as I had fancied a German audience might be. Applause, of course, there was none; but neither was there ever that deep and universal murmur, as of the wind sweeping a rich corn field, which I have heard at home in our churches, when any passage of peculiar beauty has stirred the whole multitude. The Duke, for whom an arm-chair at the top of the chancel steps had been arranged thronewise, came and went, exciting even less sensation than is excited by *our* Duke of Brunswick entering his opera-box. Between the first and second acts the ladies and gentlemen were far too busy, interchanging smiles and civilities, and partaking of the thousand good things with which every one had come prepared, to have eyes or attentions for any one; and, having followed Mendelssohn out of the orchestra with an eager eye of respect, began to stay their appetites as

zealously as if one o'clock had not been the usual dinner hour, and three the time appointed for the state banquet to be held that day in honour of the composer "*um Medicinisches Garten.*"

The dispersion of the audience, when all was over, was as amusing as its gathering had been. My countrywomen are heroines in crowds when compared with the blooming, fearful-looking damsels of North Germany; who, again, are perhaps more willing to be openly tended and comforted by their cavaliers, than with us would be thought maidenly. Some of the elder folks were still more precious. I watched one capital ancient couple, of great ponderosity, as, face to face and hand-in-hand, — the lady cleaving rear-foremost her track through the crowd by a steady pressure, — they squeezed their way along, smiling as languishingly on each other as if they had been a pair of lovers. Without the church the scene was very gay. The same wonderful equipages as I had seen in the morning, were here, there, and everywhere, departing, packed full of the songstresses and the female part of the audience, bareheaded,

smiling, and yet, in spite of such a liberal display, as free from coquetry as from awkwardness. There are English ladies who, reading this, will say, "Bareheaded in open carriages at one o'clock in the day!—how bold and improper!" and a moment afterwards, as a matter of course, tie on the bonnets which are to enhance their attractions, while they are playing the part of shopwomen at some Fababo Fancy Fair!

"She cried, 'From such murders how guiltless am I,'—
Then ran to regale on a new-taken fly."

The great object of attraction was now The Dinner—how to get a good place to eat, to see, and to hear; and all the prudent hastened at once from the church to the Vauxhall saloon with this object. After a few ineffectual attempts to gain entrance at the great door, the scullery was charged by the anxious multitude; and we made our way in,—gentlemen and ladies equally eager,—through a legion of astonished cooks, who were busy over troughs so plentifully heaped with coarse vegetables as to threaten

rather than promise for the future. The hall was arranged with three rows of long tables—the centre seats of the centre one being destined for the principal guest and the committee. A long range of windows displayed Dr. Mendelssohn's name in transparent letters: his portrait was suspended at one end in the midst of a bower of evergreens; and the room was hung with garlands, in which, besides autumn flowers, were so many strong-smelling herbs, that a country apothecary's laboratory has hardly a more medicinal atmosphere. Taste is not the same thing in Brunswick as in Dresden; and the hall would have been better for some of the notable old garland weavers who ply their trade before Tieck's door, in the Altmarkt of the Saxon capital, and make up wreaths and chaplets of a richness and elegance which would bring a fortune in Covent Garden. By three o'clock, candles and chandeliers were lighted; and when I returned to take my seat, the principal places were occupied by gentlemen and ladies in full dress,—the latter looking none the less strange for the mixture of autumn sun-

light and artificial glare by which their cheerful faces and gay clothes were displayed.

My lot cast me into a small ante-room, commanding the whole hall, and eligible, therefore, for a looker-on. Other circumstances in my position were less agreeable. I was too near one of my countrymen; and, having already received much civility from entire strangers on whom I had no claim whatsoever, it was intolerable to be attacked by him with a coarse and personal remark upon the ladies of the party close opposite to us at table. How the young travelling Englishman is endured in Germany, I often wondered; and as often felt humbled by receiving heart-warm kindness and hospitality, when I remembered how little it is felt, if even not grossly recompensed, by many of my age and condition calling themselves gentlemen! It was necessary, openly and aloud, to put an entire stop to my neighbour's communications; but, till the end of the dinner, he never ceased wrangling with the waiters, abusing the food set before him, and imprudently thrusting himself upon those he had commented on, with a

noisy audacity which one would have been ashamed to encounter in the Travellers' room of a second-rate English inn, after the third round of brandy and water.

Truth to say, the viands were detestable, and as badly served as at our most parsimonious charity-dinner. Even a Mr. Dulcimer's politeness could have found nothing to praise in the messes of stale veal with *haricots* as dry as acorns, and of greasy purple cabbage garnished with fat bacon, which those ample troughs had yielded! Three mortal hours were the dishes in procession. At the end of the third course the composer's health was drunk with musical honours, — the first of many such jovial transactions, — and there was time enough between the *entrées* for gentlemen to go and pay visits to their friends; while those who kept their seats did all but break their glasses with their knives, in the energy of their impatient summonses to the weary, perspiring waiters, who toiled here and there — saluted by a fresh volley of objurgation at every new dainty exhibited. The principal musical illustration of

the feast was cunningly presented between a black unwholesome *bouilli*, which, from its appearance, might have been any strange flesh whatsoever, and Falstaff's favourite dish, "a mess of stewed prawns," rejected unanimously by every nose in company. This was a complimentary *piece d'occasion* in three verses.

Dankes Gruſs
dem
Herrn
Dr. Felix Mendelſsohn Bartholdy.

The applause with which it was received was ear-splitting, and the music was as good as such music is generally; not as good, of course, as our own "Glorious Apollo," or "While Fools their Time;" — but then it was joined in by the ladies, — an aid which our public dinners rarely receive, save when some charitable songstress obligingly consents to sing "Lo! here the gentle lark," from The Gallery.

Like my neighbours, I had left my seat, and approached as near the central table as was possible, to hear this laudatory effusion; when I found myself stopped and accosted, by a good-natured-looking middle-aged soul, in a black

velveteen coat, who, sans ceremony, asked me "if I would tell him where I came from;" then, what my name was; and next, what was my age! There was nothing for it but, in reply, to inquire if he wished to see my passport. "No!" was his answer, with a very hearty laugh, in which the bystanders joined; our dialogue being carried on in a most edifying mixture of tongues. Then he asked me whether I did not know Dr. Mendelssohn — whether (making signs the while, as if he had a pen in his hand) I was not a *litteraire*. . . . . I thought all this sufficiently familiar, but least troublesomely dispatched by a "Yes," on which he warmly shook hands with me, and went away. I afterwards saw this gentleman often, and heard his name. He never addressed me again. Every one seemed to know him; but no one could or would tell me his calling; so that whether it was a piece of Brunswick good-nature, Brunswick impudence, Brunswick journalism, or Brunswick police (I was helped to all these solutions by my German friends), I know not to this day.

By degrees the hubbub became unbearable. One table-song succeeded another; and there were some little bands of singers, not engaged for the occasion, who, like Goldsmith's gentlemen at the "Free and Easy," were willing to make their voices heard, even in singing to a plate trundling on its edges, rather than keep still;—and who kept breaking out, in four parts, in their own corners, in valiant contempt of the general harmony. Champagne-bottles exploded so rapidly as to make a continuous *feu de joie*. Cigars were lighted by scores, and cries for "*eis*" (ice) resounded fast and furiously. How the guest, in honour of whom all this conviviality had been prepared, kept his hearing, I cannot tell, when, as a climax, Schmetzer, the tenor, no light weight, was lifted upon the shoulders of some of the young fellows, and borne round the room with roars of Bacchanal triumph. For myself, long ere this mirthful consummation was reached, I was glad to exchange the atmosphere, which might have been helped with a spoon, for the glowing and calm freshness of a September evening.

CHAP. III.

SECOND DAY.

THE ORATORIO. — THE BALL.

Length of English and German Entertainments. — Bach and Mendelssohn. — The Dom-Kirche. — Organ-Playing. — Honours to Mendelssohn. — The German Chorus-Singer in London. — The Post-Boy at Cologne. The Prussian Corporal. — The Oratorio. — False Taste in the *Programme* (with a Note on the Schwerin Festival of 1840). — German Performance of Handel. — The Ball. — A Glance at a Volksfest at Marksuhl. — More Honours to Mendelssohn. — His Coronation in the Theatre. — English Opinions on such an Apotheosis, with a Word on the social Treatment of Musicians in England. — The Ball.

In nothing is the difference between home and foreign arrangements more striking than in the quantity of entertainment deemed fashionable and sufficient. Talk of the English as lukewarm in the matter of public amusements! Where else shall we find audiences willing to be shut up in the strait seats of a theatre, or the cramping benches of an opera pit, from seven o'clock in

the evening till an hour past midnight?—where else, frames robust enough to endure, as at our provincial festivals, four hours of oratorio in the morning, and five hours of concert in the evening, with all the intermediate hurries and cares attendant on the pleasure? "Rap, rap all day, and fruz, fruz all neet," the old Duchess of Gordon's laconic description of life in London, might be adopted for the motto of quantity in English dissipation, whether its object be the new missionary from Hindustan or Owyhee, or the new Italian songstress, who has two notes more in the *altissimo* scale, and sixteen demi-semi-quavers more in one breath, than any of her predecessors!

I was sitting revolving this important distinction in my mind on the second morning, and rejoicing in the rationality of a few hours' pause, when Dr. Mendelssohn kindly paid me a visit. There were some MSS. of Sebastian Bach to be inspected; there was to be organ-playing in the Dom-Kirche: in short, it was to be one of those mornings of musical lounging and luxury, which, as regards real enjoyment

of, and insight into, the art, are sometimes worth a score of formal performances. Once again the friendly hospitality must be dwelt upon which included in these choice pleasures a total stranger, without his being allowed, for a single instant, to feel himself tolerated or *de trop*. If mine be a right idea of Brunswick, indeed, a more cheerful or agreeable residence could hardly be found in Germany, for any one willing to exchange the finer intellectual cultivation of other cities for the genial old-world usages which Fashion has not laughed nor Prosperity hardened out of the inhabitants of the place. The observer of manners will there still find the elegantly dressed and accomplished lady of the house rising up from table "on hospitable cares intent," to see that every guest's plate may be heaped to his own liking; while the host does not conceive himself excused, by a rich official uniform, from with his own hands carrying round his rarest wine, sweetening every glass as he pours it out, with some frank and pleasant saying and complacent smile. I wish I might

acknowledge, by name, the attentions of those by whose agency I know thus much of the hospitable ways and the friendly hearts of Brunswick.

The Bach manuscripts did not turn out any thing very extraordinary. It was interesting to hear Mendelssohn pronouncing on their authenticity with the certainty of a Beckford when examining a Cellini carving or jewel: though for such a thorough-going intimacy one might have been prepared by the spirit which runs through the younger composer's harmonies, especially in his later works, and by the circumstance of his being one of the finest organ-players of his time. No studies for this instrument like the "Sebastiana," as Göthe used to call the compositions of the great musician of Leipsig. There is yet another affinity between the two men, far asunder as are their conditions, and their opportunities of education, namely, in their being both true Germans;—not given to wander in the search of applause and popularity, but resting quietly among their own people; and, with honesty and patience,

producing solid and worthy works, neither for Fashion nor money's sake, but for the love of Art and of country. Such a life, and such ambition, can hardly fail to imprint a character on the productions thus originated. Nothing in them will be feverish, nothing sacrificed to the modes of the hour; they will be characterised by a healthy, noble, dignified strain of imagination; free and simple and sincere in its expression. In originality and freshness of idea, it will not do to compare any modern writer with the grand old fuguist; but, in the spirit of his life and professional career, I cannot but think that Mendelssohn has succeeded to something more than a few of Sebastian Bach's peculiar chords and progressions, and unbounded mastery over the pedal-board.

The interior of the Dom-Kirche in Brunswick is striking—striking from its antiquity, and the air of bleak naked cheerlessness which, if the unpleasant truth be told, hardly ever fails to follow the steps of Lutheranism, when possessing itself of a Catholic building. Besides the relics which date back to the crusading days

of Henry the Lion, and his statue, — and besides the ivory horn and pipe of St. Blaize, the patron of the town, — and besides the coffins of the hero who fell at Waterloo at the head of his black Brunswickers (not to be approached by an Englishman without a thrill of grateful pride), and the coffin of our ill-starred Queen Caroline (not to be approached without a thrill of shame, whatever be the political creed of the gazer), — besides these objects of interest in the vaults, the upper church has its curiosities — its fine effigies, and its quaint old seven-branched candlestick on the altar, obviously Byzantine in date, and to be accepted readily as an authentic copy of the candlestick in the Temple of Jerusalem, by all who are not disposed to wrangle with Tradition. The organ case, too, though dolefully worm-eaten and spoiled with white paint, is a fine piece of carving, of course a trifle less antique. The instrument was sadly out of order; but Mendelssohn made it speak most gloriously, winding up nearly an hour's magnificent playing, by one of Bach's grand fugues. But the thing that

comes the most vividly before me, in recalling that morning, is the expression of love and dutiful reverence on the faces of half a dozen urchins, who awaited the composer, cap in hand, at the foot of the gallery stairs. Nothing analogous to it is to be found in English admiration or French enthusiasm. It is pleasing to think that Age does not necessarily destroy that look: one evidence of those feelings whereby Man is made so much the worthier. Old faces are to be seen shining out in the obscure corners of German orchestras, even over such subordinate instruments as the drum, or the least wanted wind-instrument, on which the same homely but hearty attachment to their art and their occupation, and the same respect for any distinguished talent whom chance has sent among them, is to be as openly read as when their owners were fifteen. It was curious and interesting to catch a glimpse of like admiration behind the scenes of our German Opera in London, where, on a certain evening of the past season, chance brought a handful of distinguished instrumentalists just at the moment when the final

chorus of "Der Freischutz" was sung. The bass or tenor at the end of the semicircle was a huge coarse man, with *würst* and *sauer kraut* in every line of his face and every square inch of his body; but when the names of —— and —— were pronounced, how his face lit up as he passed them on to his neighbour! The illumination lasted only a moment,—but in it lay the secret of the success of the German chorus.

This interest in Music and Drama meets one in Germany under every variety of impersonation. I shall always connect the interesting approach from Aix to Cologne — the blue Siebengebirge rising like a cloud on the horizon to warn the pilgrim that he is approaching Father Rhine—with the honest good-humoured fellow who served as postilion when I travelled that road last October. Smart, civil, and intelligent, our party made the more of him from having, on the preceding day, been annoyed with Belgian boorishness and brutality; the latter in the form of a handsome round-faced fair-haired boy, who laughed at the raw shoulder of his

bleeding horse, and, having signalised our entry into the midst of a *Kirmesse* at Verviers by cutting a child across the eyes with his stinging whip, set up the same vacant reply to our remonstrance. Of other stuff was our German — good-natured, frank, intelligent; pointing out every object on the way,—amongst other notable things, a carriage encountered not long before our coming in sight of the Byzantine peaks of St. Geryon's and the Apostles' churches. This, he said, contained the theatrical company; "and," he added, "I take great interest in them."—"Why so?" was the natural question. "Oh, I act myself; and I act very well."—"And what is it you act?" It appeared that our friend was what in technical language is termed a supernumerary. "And did you ever wear a Roman dress?" asked ——. "No," was his answer, "but very often armour; and they generally make a herald of me, because I can blow the horn."

The very same evening, while ascending the Rhine, we stumbled upon a lover of Art in one of yet sterner vocation. This was a

magnificent-looking Prussian corporal, six feet high, and stalwart in proportion; his face ruddy with exposure to the weather, and its deep crimson setting off in vivid contrast the pale hair and moustaches with which it was plentifully garnished. He was a true military character,—erect and sententious,—one who knew the world. He was bound from Cologne to a duck-supper at the *Kirmosse* of Bonn, where he was stationed, and was taking all a soldier's tender care (the race is good to children) of a little girl, as pretty a creature as I ever saw, whom a seat in M——'s britschka, and a handful of dried plums, exalted into a queen in her own estimation. Twenty years ago this brave fellow had taught one of our party the art of swimming; and after the honest and joyful recognition of master and pupil, who had never met in the interim, the Corporal began to tell all that he had since seen and heard. Nor was this the common soldier's story. He was a man of trust and function, and had been one of those intrusted with the delicate service of arresting the Archbishop of Cologne. The

prelate, he said, when aware of his entrance and his errand, had simply said, "Do you smoke?—I see you do—so do I. We shall not quarrel on our journey." On one of our party addressing the other by his name,—"What!" he exclaimed, "the great pianist! I am glad to have seen him." And then it came out that the Corporal had his own taste in music, and he favoured us with his judgment upon "Il Barbiere," which he had heard at Cologne the evening before, and did not much approve. "I have always read the papers carefully," said he, "to see what is good; so that by this time I think I ought to know something about the matter." The Corporal's connoisseurship and the postboy's dramatic skill and horn-playing might make up a very small amount of artistic qualification; but it is of the aggregate of such things that a nation's taste is composed.

To return to the Festival. Brunswick dined in the interval between the organ-playing and the commencement, at two o'clock, of the performance in the church. This last would hardly be accepted as sacred, according to the English

acceptation of the word; for the *programme* ran thus: —

FIRST PART.

"Jubilee Overture" - -	*Weber.*
Adagio (violin), Herr Müller -	*Spohr.*
Psalm - - - - -	*Schneider.*

SECOND PART.

Concerto (clarionet), Herr Tretbar	*Klein.*
Symphony, C minor - -	*Beethoven.*
"Hallelujah Chorus" (Messiah) -	*Handel.*

A selection comprising three master-works could hardly have been made less satisfactory than this.* The two instrumental solos, though

* Other selections of music, on these occasions, which have come before me, would disappoint those who have conceived a high idea of German musical taste and cultivation. At the Summer Festival of 1840, given at Mecklenburg-Schwerin, where, also, the "St. Paul" with the "Creation" were performed entire, four of the vocal pieces at the concert were, an air by Faccioli, Donnizetti's sickly "Vivi tu," Bellini's noisy duet, "Suoni la tromba," and a flimsy bravura, with violin *obligato*, from Herold's "Pré aux Clercs," — the last *encored*. I do not believe that Schubert's songs are, in any German concerts, stock pieces as established as at Paris. This disappointing want of nationality and self-respect, however, seems happily confined to vocal music. Of its working, as regards the condition of Opera in Germany, I shall have occasion largely to record my impressions.

But if the *programme* of the Schwerin concert be dis-

very well played, were sadly out of place, not only in a church, but with reference to the massive and dignified compositions among which they were set. Among these last, however, Schneider's psalm is not to be included, it being merely one of those correct and unmarked mediocrities which may, at times, become more antipathetic to the ear than compositions containing glaring faults or frivolities, but still characteristic. Nor could I be satisfied with the execution of Handel's "Hallelujah." Dignity, breadth, grandeur, mass of tone, seemed wanting; it was taken, moreover, a trifle too fast. It was something to fancy that, with not much that is peculiar and exclusive to boast of in music, we English possess the secret of Handel! I have not had many opportunities of testing the reasonableness of this fancy; but the

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appointing, because ill considered, that Festival furnished another to my list of illustrations of the extent to which music is the hearty care of gentle and simple in Germany. So all-pervading was the interest of the meeting, that the Duke placed all his officers and household attendants at the service of the committee.

few hitherto permitted me abroad have always been followed by the same result. The solo singing of M. Geraldy, of the Brussels Conservatoire, is, perhaps, the most striking exception.

The Egydien Kirche, as before, was crowded; the orchestra and chorus, as before, were sedulous and energetic. When the symphony of Beethoven was over, a *feu de joie* of splendid *bouquets*, carefully hidden up till then, was discharged upon the conductor, by the ladies. But the climax of enthusiasm was yet to come.

This was reserved for the ball in the evening. Of all describable things a ball is one of the most indescribable on paper, unless it be a Paris *bal masqué*, — which, indeed, has only too many remarkable features! A people's ball, too, is a pretty thing. I shall not soon forget a picture I saw, during a stoppage of the Schnellpost betwixt Leipsic and Frankfort, in the midst of a *volksfest*, at Marksuhl, on the edge of the Thuringian forest, just as twilight was beginning to close in. The little market-place was gaily dressed out. Round the pine-tree in its centre four smaller ones

had been planted. In the midst, raised upon a platform, stood a fiddler and a fifer, playing *galoppe* tunes, in the true spirit, though the fiddle was cracked, and the fife asthmatic. A trombone or two had been laid by, that the musicians, too, might take a turn; and round and round, by that lessening light, were seen careering the entire population of the place: young men in *kittels* (blouses), with maidens in their flat country caps, little boys and girls, and tougher older people than are ever to be found on the floor with us, save, perhaps, on a holiday eve in South Wales,—the whole party performing their evolutions with an ease, a smoothness, and an absence of rudeness or riot, delightful to see. They had still some hours of waltz in them! Presently, from among the bystanders, a good-natured man detached himself, and offered to all the Schnellpost strangers round a glass of beer from the patriarchal bottle beside him; nor would partners have been wanting, had time and travel allowed any of us to join the maze.—But this is an inadmissible digression from the apotheosis of Mendelssohn at the

Brunswick Festival, which—to come back to our starting point— made the ball not only delightful, but describable.

The scene of this festive ceremony was the theatre, which had been gaily decorated for the occasion, though not sufficiently lighted. A suite of rooms had been temporarily added for supper. At the furthest depth of the stage a stately pavilion, draperied with white, had been erected. This was at first concealed by the curtain, which was kept down till the right moment—the arrival of the composer. When he entered the theatre, according to preconcerted signal, he was met by two young girls, who led him gently forward—the curtain meanwhile slowly rising—to this shrine of honour. Six other young ladies, dressed as *genii*, there awaited him; and, after a brief address from one of them, a laurel crown was placed on his head.

Why is it that an Englishman feels a certain reluctant hesitation in recording this, and the enthusiasm which attended the whole innocent triumph, as though he were giving an undue importance to a piece of child's play? Are not

the sums we lavish on Art—is not the toleration extended by Fashion to certain "stars" and wonders,—the rest, if *paid*, despised, neglected, and thrust aside,—at least as flagrant a folly? Surely the enthusiasm was not much wiser, which was displayed in one of England's Theatres Royal, at the Van Amburgh dinner, than at this same Brunswick coronation. For charity's sake, let *neither* manifestation be assumed as extravagant or irrational; but, for justice's sake, let English tongues be silenced by remembering what has been done for prize-fighters and menagerie-keepers, and forbear to satirize the Germans as overstrained and Della-Cruscan in their expressions of sympathy: neither let a tamer of wild beasts, however modest and worthy as a man, be placed in the scale of consideration *above* the friend and pupil of some of the greatest minds in Europe; and himself the most distinguished name among the moderns, in his own art.

Another digression!—yet not utterly valueless, if the comparative estimation of the musician in England is at all fairly shadowed forth

in it. In other respects, the ball was a mere ball — as I have said, indescribable. Pretty faces, and fresh toilettes, by the hundred; gay and gallant youths, only a little more hairy-visaged and tender than with us at home; a good band playing excellent waltz music; the Duke in his box for a part of the evening; a liberal and plenteous supper; and an English lady standing upright in the midst of the easy, blithe-faced multitude, and declaring, the while she fanned herself with an air of satisfied dignity, that "the company really behaved very well;" — this is all that is to be told concerning the ball at Brunswick.

CHAP. IV.

THIRD DAY.

MENDELSSOHN'S CONCERT. — THE OPERA.

Programme of the Concert. — Schmetzer's Singing.— Müller's Violin-playing.— Molique's Concertos.— Mendelssohn's Piano-forte playing compared with that of Moscheles, Chopin, Liszt. — His fancy.— The end of the Concert. — The end of an English Festival, with a thought of Malibran. — Dinner. — King Ernest of Hanover's English Followers. — The New Palace at Brunswick. — The Hof Theater. — More North German Good Nature. — "Guido and Ginevra." — Well-contrived Stage Arrangements. — A Word upon Classicality. — French Operas with German Words. — The Performance. — Schmetzer. — Pöck. — Madame Fischer-Achten. — The fourth Act. — The Catastrophe of my Evening.

THE last entertainment of the Brunswick Festival was Dr. Mendelssohn's morning concert, given in the saloon where the public dinner had been held. The *programme* was excellent — alike for its selection and its brevity; a thing to be imitated by the perpetrators of our benefit concerts: —

FIRST PART.

Overture.
Air, "Il mio tesoro," sung by Herr Schmetzer *Mozart.*
Concerto P. F. (D minor), performed and composed by - - - - - *Mendelssohn.*

SECOND PART.

Violin Concerto. Herr Müller - - *Molique.*
Serenade P. F. and orchestra, performed and composed by - - - - *Mendelssohn.*
Symphony (A major) - - - *Beethoven.*

The piano-forte was, of course, in this concert the principal attraction. I was unable to relish Herr Schmetzer's singing of "Il mio tesoro," which was as much too coarse and unfinished as Rubini's execution of that far-famed cavatina seems wire-drawn and luscious, and sung (if the metaphor may be permitted) in black and white. Moreover, Herr Müller, the leader of the renowned Brunswick quartett, though an excellent violin-player of the true, as opposed to the tremulous and spasmodic school originated by Paganini, failed to interest me either by any speciality of execution, or in the choice of his music. With all their soundness of construction, and the quaint and graceful piquancy of some

of their *finale*, there is a dryness of manner in the concerto of Molique, which renders them unattractive to the amateur who is no violinist, even when they are aided by their composer's playing. The airs, however, are more welcome to the ear than the interminable airs with variations, the taste for which — thanks to the fickleness of fashion — seems to be subsiding in favour of the elegy, the romance, the serenade, and the authors of the fantastic and poetical school.

The piano-forte playing, then, was the chief treat. It is rarely that I have been so delighted without novelty or surprise having some share in the delight. The exact fulfilment of any anticipation is generally more or less blanking, though vanity and self-deceit refuse to allow it. It would have been absurd to expect much *pianism*, as distinct from music, in the performance of one writing so straightforwardly, and without the coquetries of embroidery, as Mendelssohn. Accordingly, his performance has none of the exquisite *finesse* of Moscheles, on the score of which it has been elsewhere said

that "there is wit in his playing;" — none of the delicate and plaintive and spiritual seductions of Chopin, who sweeps the keys with so insinuating and gossamer a touch, that the crudest and most chromatic harmonies of his music float away under his hand, indistinct yet not unpleasing, like the wild and softened discords of the Æolian harp; — none of the brilliant extravagancies of Liszt, by which he illuminates every composition he undertakes, with a living but lightening fire, and imparts to it a soul of passion, or a dazzling vivacity, the interpretation never contradicting the author's intention, but more poignant, more intense, more glowing than ever the author dreamed of. And yet, no one that has heard Mendelssohn's piano-forte playing can find it dry — can fail to be excited and fascinated by it, despite of its want of all the caprices and colourings of his contemporaries. Solidity, in which the organ touch is given to the piano without the organ ponderosity — spirit (witness his execution to the *finale* of the D minor concerto) animating, but never intoxicating the ear —

expression which, making every tone sink deep, requires not the garnishing of trills and *appoggiaturi*, or the aid of changes of time,—are among its outward and salient characteristics; but, within and beyond all these, though hard to be conveyed in words, there is to be felt a mind clear and deep, an appreciation of character and form which refers to the inner spirit rather than the outward details: the same which gives so exquisitely southern a character to the barcarole and the gondola tune in Mendelssohn's "Lieder ohne Worte," and its fresh, Ossianic, sea-wildness to his overture to the "Hebriden" ("Isles of Fingal"); — the same which enabled him, when little more than a boy, in the happiest piece of descriptive music of our time, to illustrate Shakspeare's exquisite faëry scenes neither feebly nor unworthily.* Execu-

* Perhaps it may be permitted me to quote from a note on this very composition published some few years ago. "I can never forget the delight awakened in me by the first hearing of the overture to the 'Midsummer Night's Dream;'— how it brought before me those delicious scenes in the old Athenian wood; — how I saw Cobweb, Pease-blossom, Moth, and Mustard-seed keeping up a

tion without grimace — fancy cheerful and excursive but never morbid — and feeling under the control of a serene, not sluggish spirit; — I can come no nearer pleasing myself in a character, than by these words, which are still far from doing justice to their subject. One word more, which is perhaps a half-definition. — Mendelssohn's is eminently manly music; and loses effect, beyond that of almost any other of his contemporaries, when attempted by female hands.

The Concerto and the Serenade were too soon over — things to be regretted as not lasting longer, for the sake of the manner in which they

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ceaseless gambol among the violets, or frolicking in their new flower-liveries round their queen, Titania; — how I watched the elfin heralds stealing noiselessly hither and thither through the dimmer thickets, and then, of a sudden, sharply winding their woodbine horns to bid tiny guests to the revel, with such ancient, quaint hairy heads peeping from between the under boughs of the trees, as gleam out of the distant corners of some of Ratzsch's designs. Nay, I even imagined I could detect the snore from the 'ass's nowl' of the enchanted Bottom breaking through the sweet music of the faëry troop." — *Conti the Discarded*, vol. ii. p. 264.

were performed, and because they were almost the last music of the meeting. The applause which attended them was what might have been expected — what was deserved. Then came the beautiful Symphony by Beethoven, which was hardly relished according to its merits, — for who can settle himself to enjoy a last pleasure? — then drove up the primitive equipages and the remarkable charioteers I had watched arrive, in such a different mood, but three days before; and the glory of "the celebrity" — as Dr. Burney primly called the Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey — was over!

No one that has ever attended an English Musical Festival in the provinces can have forgotten the flatness and desolation which succeeds it; — the doleful sight of travelling carriages packed, and musical instruments departing, and the destruction of decorations only a few days before surveyed with such complacent hopefulness as makes temporary lath-

and-plaster work imposing, and coarse red baize magnificent. How well do I remember, in the Amphitheatre at Liverpool on such an occasion, when the last notes of the concert had hardly sounded and the company had only one half departed, — watching Malibran as she sate carelessly on the edge of the orchestra, and followed, with her half arch half melancholy eye, the rude and immediate attack upon all the temporary decorations, of a legion of grimy operatives, who made the axe and the hammer re-echo, where so lately had been heard her voice, and the plaudits which had replied to it. I see her now as she then was — bright and triumphant in the early days of her English triumphs, with something in her face of the artlessness of a child, more of the resolution of a woman who has struggled and suffered; her features clear of those haggard lines which of late deepened and saddened their meaning. She was then in the fresh morning of her powers; her voice was untouched by the wear and tear of ceaseless exertion, her enthusiasm guiltless of those strange and audacious flights by

which, subsequently, it seemed almost necessary for her to stimulate herself so as to support her constant intercourse with a public little less capricious than herself, and far less instructed. I have before me her statue-like head, bound with a fine Venetian chain, — a golden crescent hung in the centre of her forehead; and the little dark velvet mantle in which she nestled, with the prettiest coquetry possible, while she kept in play half a dozen of the committee-men in office who crowded round her, finding it easier to stare at one so fascinating than to reply to one so ready-witted. Perhaps the casual meeting with ——, who was a good deal bound up with my music of those days, did its part in calling up that vivid phantom as I strolled hotel-wards down the untidily-kept avenue of the Medicinisches Garten at Brunswick.

There was nothing, at all events, in the aspect of that friendly-looking ancient town to remind any one of those woful days of "reckoning when the banquet's o'er" which must be endured in England. The table at the Blauen

Engel was as full as usual; the indescribables with which it was spread were as usual consumed, "lustily," as the psalm says, "and with good courage." My lot cast me into the neighbourhood of a very gentlemanly and agreeable officer from ——, but the subject of our conversation was any thing but gratifying — it being the coarse and disgraceful outbreaks by which certain of King Ernest of Hanover's satellites had recently managed to degrade the name of Englishman in the country. It would have indeed been folly to expect other results from personages already so well known at home as the offenders. He who has graduated in what is miscalled "Life in London" does not change his skin easily, neither the *roué* his spots. But it is humiliating to have these things retailed to one when from home. It is true that, had my friend been a Brunswicker, as a Londoner I was possessed of materials for the most ample and triumphant retort. As it was, I was glad to change the subject for the Harz country, and Mademoiselle Löwe, of the Berlin Opera, — a never-failing topic.

So often as I sate down to table, or entered a public conveyance, this lady's gifts and graces were extolled to me with warm commendation as the best thing in North Germany.

Dinner was despatched in greater haste than usual, and the guests were banding together in plans for the rest of the day,—the favourite one being a ride of seven miles along the newly completed railroad to Wolfenbuttel, where a *Café Turc*, with its excellent band of music, opens its doors to gratify the national propensity for coffee-house and tea-garden meetings. Less than this contented me; and, having desired the *oberkellner* to secure me a place in the diligence to Goslar early the next morning, and a *sperr-sitz* for the opera that evening, I gave myself up to the moment, and strolled out to have one more look at a pleasant place I was not likely soon to see again. My hour's ramble was principally occupied in admiring the outside of the Palace, the new building by Herr Ottmer, already celebrated among the musicians by his excellent and classical Sing-Academie at Berlin, and who is, if I mistake not, a Brunswicker. If so,

he has worthily enriched his own town with a building sufficiently magnificent in its proportions and chaste in its ornament to shame our new Pimlico Palace — that tawdry heap of deformity which I would fain have foreigners pass with closed eyes. Nor was it a small pleasure, while sauntering round this fine building, and regaling myself among the orange-trees which border its terraces, to encounter so many good-humoured and well-dressed groups of all classes and conditions: so the afternoon hour went over tranquilly and agreeably, till it was time to drop into my place at the Hof Theater.

The Opera House at Brunswick is agreeably sized; indeed, all the theatres in Germany I saw appeared to me well proportioned; if small, without that feeling of confinement — if large, without that obtrusive vastness, which severally make our London majors and minors so comfortless, in spite of the superior beauty of their decorations. The Ducal box is to the left of the stage, and the first row of stalls was exclusively occupied by blue uniform coats and bullion epaulettes; the whole caparison so redolent of tobacco, that

one regretted it should be worn by such clean-limbed, comely wearers. Hospitality and civility, I have said, are in the air of Brunswick. In England, we are too apt to behave in our public places, to the neighbours Chance sends us, as though every look we gave them was a demonstration defensive of home, hearth, and pocket, against false Counts de Tracy and other such gentry; or if we lay aside our surliness and break through that barricade of monosyllabic remark, — the "fluide Britannique," with which George Sand charges us, — it is to overdo civility and become indiscreetly familiar. Between the acts of the opera, I was claimed, by one of the most agreeably intelligent gentlemen I ever encountered, whom I had all the week admired at the *table d'hôte*, for the care he took of his charge — two young ladies; and because his head reminded me of the beautiful and spiritual sketch in oil of Thorwaldsen brought from Rome by Rothwell. Not only now did he give me more information than I was able to take in and remember, about the objects of natural and scientific interest in the district I was bound for; but he encouraged

one of his shy, gentle-looking companions to talk to the stranger on lighter topics, with an obvious pride in her excellent English, manifested by a complacent smile at every remark she made, which was very engaging. I could not but think, while profiting by this good nature, how differently matters go at home, and how little chance any ill-dressed foreigner, with two travelling words of the language in his mouth — the "How much?" for instance, that inquiry introducing the innocent German in England to such a painful acquaintance with the different values of money — would run of having his evening's pleasure in one of our theatres thus enhanced.

But I am writing of music as well as manners. I had naturally anticipated my first opera in Germany with great interest. At Hamburg I had been unlucky — missing, by one evening, "Robert le Diable," and making one of an audience of ninety or thereabouts, scattered up and down the capacious theatre of that town, to witness the easy genteel comedy of Madame Lenz, and to wonder at the quan-

tity of paint, in the shape of age and wrinkles, which the Uncle of the piece (I know not his name) had contrived to put on. My expectations, it is true, were not immoderate. I feared, from my experiences of the Festival, that I should find voices better willed than taught to sing, and actors whose physical powers were a little at variance with the characters they undertook to represent,—a Juliet of a certain age, and of a matronly port — a Romeo guiltless of figure, but not guiltless of an obtrusive display of his deficiencies, by dress and gesture. But I had some experience of German orchestras and choruses; some hope, thanks to Herr Kapellmeister Methfessel, to listen to good music ; and it never had occurred to me that I was to come to the Brunswick Festival to hear M. Halèvy's "Guido and Ginevra," — a work not particularly popular in its birth-place, Paris, though there aided by the magnificent voice and magnificent acting of Duprez.

There are some stories for which novelists and dramatists have a hankering thoroughly unaccountable. One is this same legend of the *Strada*

della Morte in Florence,—which in Magdeburg is given to the Frau von Assenburgh's monument, —and in England, I now forget to which Abbey Church vault:—a legend which not even Leigh Hunt's rich and delicate poetry and fine conception of character * have been able to popularise

* The "Legend of Florence" has been the subject of so much excellent criticism, that I may be thought superfluous in thus once again alluding to its superior merits. Still it seems to me that one of its strongest points of excellence has been overlooked,—I mean the character of Agolanti, as a study of bad temper. To make so ignoble a failing an object of sympathy is impossible; it is but the grander crimes and the grander passions which exercise a fascinating influence. But in Mr. Hunt's play there is an individuality thrown into the part of the harsh and cruel husband, which makes him far overtop all his other fellow-actors, and gives his unjust doings a share in our interest as well as their sorrows. He has his trials as well as Ginevra. He has within him that dark and perverted spirit, which makes him strong in his own warped sense of predominance and authority: he is beset without by a herd of gay, communicative, interfering people, whose very presence is hateful to one so grave and reserved; and who, while they plead with him and lecture him, are totally unable to comprehend the terrible possession under the influence of which he inflicts the wrongs they would benevolently redress. He is, in short, altogether the man of real life, not the unredeemed villain

with us. The French librettist M. Scribe, — unlike the rest who have been led away by one or two effective situations to treat a subject in its interest singularly morbid, and in its close altogether intractable,—has set these in the midst of horrors of great melodramatic potency, and thus made up a book, after its coarse kind, exceedingly effective. It may be this, yet more than a tendency to play French Opera, which has helped to insure for "Guido and Ginevra" a popularity in Germany, never gained by it in Paris. This was its first performance in Brunswick.

The parts were thus distributed:—

Cosmo de Medicis - -	*Herr Fischer.*
Ginevra, his daughter -	*Madame Fischer Achten.*
Manfred, Duke of Ferrara -	*Herr Pöck.*
Guido, a young painter -	*Herr Schmetzer.*
Ricciarda, a singer - -	*Dem. Fanny Mejo.*
Leonora, a lady in waiting -	*Madame Gerard.*
Lorenzo, Chamberlain of the de Medicis - - -	*Herr Gerard.*

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whom "limners love to paint, and ladies to look upon;" and there are few figures in the list of modern creation so simply and clearly conceived, so simply and completely wrought out.

Fortebraccio, a leader of banditti -	*Herr Bussmeyer.*
Teobaldo, Sacristan of the Cathedral of Florence - - - -	*Herr Kuhn.*
Antoinette, a young peasant -	*Demr. Schmidt.*
&c. &c. &c.	

In writing of the component parts of German opera, at least as far as I know it, according to the degrees of merit, first should come the chorus and orchestra; then the singers in combination; then the stage arrangements; lastly, the singers individually considered. But yet more than by the orchestra, for which M. Halévy's music offers such ample occupation, — and yet more than by the chorus, which, in the "Guido," is put to sing the poorest music in which any national style was ever attempted,—was I struck with the exceeding propriety and sedulousness with which the opera was got up. The stage arrangements at Brunswick were the first illustrations I witnessed in Germany, of the skill and intelligence which are brought to bear upon every performance; no matter what the means may be — no matter what the scale on which it is produced. As the grumbler I met in the

Salle Bergère expressed it, much of the music of M. Halévy is written "for the eye."* Thus, in the "Guido," the first act has the *festa* of the Madonna de l'Arco; the third, a double scene, the upper portion of which displays a dim and mouldering chapel, with a remote perspective of heavy columns and arches draperied with banners, and hung with heraldic escutcheons; the one requiring prodigality as to numbers and decorations — the other, space. Both were afforded on a stage of no very eminent dimensions, the former from a wardrobe and store of properties any thing but dazzling. These may be thought unimportant matters by

* That I may not deal too sweepingly in definitions, I ought to remind the reader that if "La Juive" of M. Halévy gained its success by the aid of spectacle, he has on the other hand ventured in his comic opera, "L'Eclair," an experiment, the like of which is not tolerated on the stage, save in "Il Matrimonio Segreto." "L'Eclair" has no chorus, and only four characters; and the music is well esteemed in Paris. To myself, I confess, it appears dry and frivolous; and its acceptance ascribable to the dramatic skill and finish which distinguishes all the presentments at the Opera Comique. If I am not unjust, then, "L' Eclair," as well as "La Juive," is, in some degree, "music for the eye."

those profound judges of Art who would dispense with all such adjuncts as being meretricious and in false taste, and even go the length of wishing that the experiment should be tried of declaiming Shakspeare's plays after the naked and unadorned traditions of the Globe and Fortune; — that is, with a sign-board brought in to acquaint the gazer that the scene is Illyria; or to tell him that he had crossed from "the loyal Leonatus" in Rome, to the British chamber of Imogen. Why not, also, if this were indeed expedient, or even reverent, permit some "squeaking Cleopatra" to "boy the greatness" of the Egyptian queen, or insist that Lady Macbeth should be presented with the down of adolescence upon her lip and chin — because such things were in the original performances? It is a like blind imitation which has led some of the artists of Young Germany and Young France, not only to travesty themselves in the toque or pourpoint of their models; but also to imagine that because Fra Beato and Raphael painted nettle-sprigs for trees, in the back-grounds of their

scriptural pieces, they must do the same; as if, by such undistinguishing admiration, they might emulate the Madonnas and the angelic hierarchies of their predecessors. Surely, the imperishable genius, and the imperfect utterance of it belonging to the mechanical attainments of any special æra, rest upon widely different traditions, and bear widely different values.

But, at this rate, I shall never get to the end of "Guido and Ginevra." The execution of M. Halévy's music by the orchestra and chorus was very good, though short, of course, of the high finish of L'Académie Royale. To have looked for this would have been preposterous: the wonder is, not that the truest style and the most delicate polish should not be entirely attained, but that correctness and firmness of performance should be possible under the circumstances. In the present state of opera in Germany, not only is a constant change of performances part of every system of management, but a constant change of schools. You will hear, one night, "L'Elisir d'Amore;" the

next, "La Sonnambula,"—"Le Postillon de Loujumeau," as a certainty,—nor less certainly Meyerbeer's "Robert,"—however limited be the resources of the theatre;—*I hope*, in their turn, the operas of Mozart and Weber; though I know that the Brunswick singers, Herrn Pöck and Schmetzer, when recently in London, were somewhat unprepared for the classical music of their own country which they were called upon to perform. Thus, not only is it next to impossible that there should be any settlement of style as regards performance, such as at once decides the individuality of a French orchestra, but the number of rehearsals must also necessarily be very limited. All the musical world knows to what extent the composer's privilege in this respect is carried at the Parisian Opera; where, again, his ministers in the orchestra have not to contend with a strange and antipathetic music. I do not suppose that it would be possible with French singers, and under French direction, even at the great metropolitan theatre, to "get together" the "Euryanthe" of Weber in twice the time

which, probably, in Brunswick was devoted to the study of the "Guido and Ginevra." As for England, who can have forgotten the outcry of self-praise raised upon the very mediocre performance of "Guillaume Tell" at Drury Lane, which is now a stock-piece in every little theatre throughout Germany? We must not speak of England, when opera is the subject. The neatness of Herr Methfessel's orchestra particularly struck me, in one passage of Ginevra's great tomb scene, where a rapidly moving accompaniment of groups of six semiquavers, passes from tenor to bass, in an unbroken and close *pizzicato*, requiring much firmness to maintain, as our Italian Opera violin players know, who never could be made, even by Signor Costa, to draw out a similar but far simpler passage, in the last movement of the grand terzett in "Guillaume Tell," with any thing like clearness or certainty. The female chorus I thought crude in tone; but its part in the opera lies high, and frequently in those extreme keys which the elder composers judiciously avoided, even in days when the diapason

of the orchestra was some half a tone lower than it is now.

After the orchestra and chorus come the principal singers. They went through their parts moderately well, but no more. Indeed, the peculiar structure of the French language, piquant in its separate words, but lending itself so unwillingly to rhythmical purposes, that the elongated "patri-*ē*," and "voya-*ge*," become indispensable; stamps, too, so much individuality of form upon its music, that the latter, when mated with a translated text, becomes singularly ungracious to speakers and singers. Even Rossini's "Guillaume Tell," which is not wholly French, loses (so to say) its *bouquet*, when given with Italian words. How much more must the music of M. Halévy suffer,—every note of which tells of Paris and the Conservatoire,—by being fitted with the heavier and less tractable German rhymes and phrases! Hence, the efforts of the vocal *corps*, though satisfactory, were very laborious. Herr Schmetzer, as all London knows, is not the person best fitted by Nature to enact the part of a love-lorn swain.

He had attired himself, too, with singular courage: and having forborne, by "planting out" the flatnesses of his face after the picturesque fashion of Italian heroes, to give his beautiful voice the chance of seeming to issue from chivalric lips, — the painful contortions of his fat tenderness amounted to the ridiculous. I never saw him without thinking of one of Jan Steen's saints and martyrs. But he sung the exquisitely mannered romance in the first act tolerably sentimentally; and in the great tomb scene, where he goes down into the vault to bewail his beloved, ere her trance breaks, as a deep and friendly shadow veiled his gesticulations, he was forcible and impressive. Herr Pöck, the Agolanti of the opera, performed the cruel husband's part with that manly, muscular spirit, and that amplitude of crude tone, which have since made him so popular in London, and must lead every one to regret that position or inclination has caused him to neglect the refinements of vocal cultivation. Madame Fischer-Achten, again, though chargeable with that maturity of person which, to English eyes, amounts to so

serious a drawback, pleased me more than any *prima donna* I was afterwards to hear, by a fair *soprano* voice capable of neat and easy execution, and a truth and intensity of passion of which our operatic ladies rarely dream. The actor who played Fortebraccio, the hired assassin, by whose ministry Ginevra is poisoned, at the instance of her rival, the courtezan Ricciarda, was at once feeble and heavy; and elaborate in his attempts to give the dash of cowardly and superstitious humour which the part requires to relieve the odium of his mercenary villany. But the attempt was made: the whole corps, indeed, was in possession of the story as well as of the music, and carried the audience along with them. Nor is a German audience difficult to carry along,—being at once fair and patient, willing and enthusiastic:—how different from that heterogeneous assembly of *blasè* and uninstructed persons who assemble at home to pronounce upon a new opera! I should have been ashamed of myself, could I have there criticised by the stop-watch, and forborne to bear them company.

On the contrary, I, too, was carried away to my heart's content,—for the moment as ready to maintain the superexcellence of the Brunswick corps, as if I had never heard a Pasta, or a Duprez, or a Lablache;—my dreams of "Fidelio," "Euryanthe," and "Alceste," all forgotten. To the credit of our good taste, "Guido and Ginevra" has never, like other French operas, been played in England, with or without music; so I may just mention that, to heighten the story with an additional dose of horror, the scene is laid in Florence, during the time of the plague, and the death of Ginevra is compassed by the mercenary Fortebraccio selling to her an infected veil. In the fourth act, after she has been delivered from the tomb by the band of plunderers who descend thither to strip the rings from her fingers, Poetical Justice—crammed down the throats of the audience by M. Scribe, in doses which are *not* homoepathic—ordains that the pestilence should strike the husband, who has refused to receive her, and that upon his wretched mistress showing terror and cowardice, and attempting to escape, he

should drag her towards him, and declare, frantically, that she is his, for life and death! Grossly repulsive as is the melodrame of this situation, I was for the moment all eye and ear, and so engrossingly wound up to the highest pitch of attention, as to be annoyed by a whispering in my neighbourhood, and impatient at having my coat-sleeve plucked. I turned at last—to meet a dozen moist, heated, earnest faces, looking furious things at me for my impassiveness in not having earlier attended to a summons which by this time was disturbing all the *parterre*.

It was a moment before a romantic theory of *espionage* and Police connected with my questioner in the black velvet coat had flashed past me. Who *could* want me? There he stood—the civil, fat, flustered *oberkellner* of the Blauen Engel, mopping his forehead, and quite too much out of breath to speak. Cruickshank or Phiz might have designed his look of upbraiding impatience at the tardiness with which the truth broke upon me, that the *eilwagen* for Goslar started, not, as I had pleased to suppose, at eight

on the following morning, but at ten that very night, — the third quarter after nine having already struck; my bill still unpaid, and my baggage still unpacked. Greater became the honest man's disapproval, when he found that I could only laugh at the blunder — only laugh while scouring the streets at his heels to the astonishment of the placid evening pleasurers — only laugh at the scene awaiting me in my comfortless little room. There the entire household, from Herr Driesen, the landlord, down to the least male thing in his employ, was bent on the hospitable duty of "speeding the parting guest;" one, cramming away an odd stocking — another, a bunch of pens and this journal — a third, in his zeal to economize space, and to give me every tittle that rightfully belonged to me, all but emptying a half-finished *kruke* of Seltzer water into the compartment of my portmanteau allotted to clean linen. It was all in vain: the clock struck the fatal hour long ere the task was done; and the thalers paid for my place must needs be sacrificed. It was vexatious, with them, to have

lost the end of "Guido and Ginevra," which I know not even to this day. The rest was all easy enough. It was easy to resign myself to another night in Brunswick, and to take vehicle the next day for Halberstadt, which, though not in the direct route, was equally eligible with Goslar as a starting point to the Harz country.

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MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

FRANCE AND GERMANY:

A

SERIES OF TRAVELLING SKETCHES

OF

Art and Society.

BY HENRY F. CHORLEY,

AUTHOR OF "CONTI," ETC. ETC.

"Praising all, is praising none." — *Burney.*

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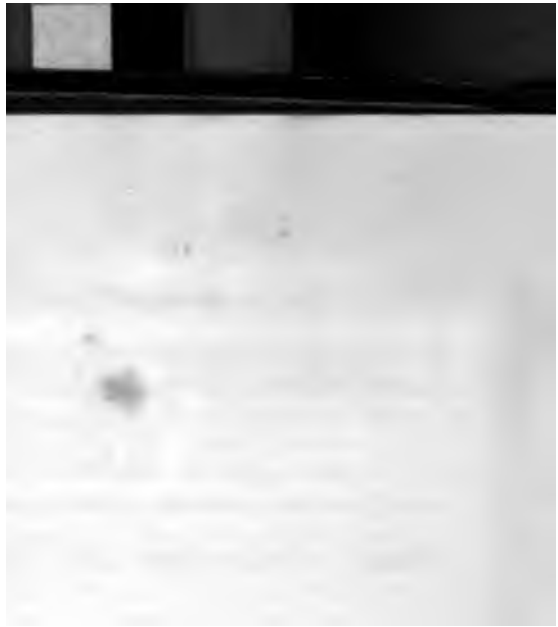
MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

GERMANY.

THREE DAYS IN THE HARZ COUNTRY.



MUSIC AND MANNERS
IN
GERMANY.

THREE DAYS IN THE HARZ COUNTRY.

CHAPTER I.

A NIGHT ON THE BROCKEN.

From Brunswick to Halberstadt. — Mademoiselle Löwe. — The Prinz Eugen at Halberstadt; — Its Landlord. —News of Lord Eglintoun and the Marquis of Waterford. — The "Close" in Halberstadt. — The Jehu. — Wernigerode. — Travelling Puppet-Show. — Ilsenburg. — Inn Sketches. — The Old Man and the Child. — Walk to the Ilsenstein. — Ascent of the Brocken. — The Brockenhaus. — Göttingen Students. — The Sunset. — More Inn Sketches. —The Travellers' Book; — German and English Entries therein. — The Entertainment of the Evening. — A Word on Part-singing and popular Music in Germany. — Liedertafeln Societies founded by Zelter. — Younger Liedertafel Society. — Their Meetings. — Their Organization. — The Germans' Love of Scenery as well as Smoke. —Weber's Part Songs. — "Am Rhein." — German Ignorance of English Part Songs. — The winding up of the Orgie.

A TRIFLE of tobacco-smoke to be swallowed allowed for, the drive from Brunswick to Hal-

berstadt was pleasant enough. The afternoon was glorious—the perfection of autumn weather, and the road offers some agreeable objects. Between Brunswick and Wolfenbuttel stands the Duke's country-house of Richmond, which is apparently as English in its Elizabethan style, and in the trimness of the rich garden round it, as in its name. Then the trees on either side of the way were hung with a profusion of apples, plums, and pears, glowing with every sunny colour of the season, and so appetizing as to make it positively disappointing that, at the first change of horses, no other refection was to be procured than a cup of coffee and a cigar. Every trench-bank and field enclosure, too, showed a roadside Flora of poppies, campanulas, and huge mulleins, gay enough to attract any eye that is sensitive to rich colour. Not long after Wolfenbuttel was left behind, the Brocken began to rise on the horizon;—and what is there in the world so engaging to the fancy as watching the gradual growth of a hill, more especially if the hill have a name and a legend?

My companions in the schnellpost were

cheerful and good-natured. While waiting under the vine which clothes the wall of the Brunswick post-house, we had become very sociable. As we jogged on, we discussed the Festival just over, and agreed that Mendelssohn was the musical hope of modern Germany. I was warned, when I reached Leipsic, to open my ears to Mademoiselle Schlegel, as a young singer of great promise, and excessively pretty to boot. I was promised a wonderful treat in Berlin, from the Löwe — the only songstress, as far as my experience served, who enjoyed a general, as distinguished from a local reputation, in North Germany, and was as popular among all travellers as Madame Vestris in England. It was of no use to quote Grisi or Persiani,— had I named Madame Dorus-Gras, a French singer, it would have been as much as my popularity was worth. "There was no one, there had been no one, like the Löwe, for beauty and brilliancy, since the days of Sontag: — happy was the man who could hear her, and happier he who could speak to her!"

The day went down gloriously, and the

friendly and thriving town of Halberstadt, where we joined the great road to Berlin, looked quaintly picturesque in the strong lights and broad purple shadows of evening. I cannot fancy a pleasanter halting-place for a night than the Prinz Eugen. While I was discussing the savoury roast partridge (a sure *piece de resistance*, let me warn all those whom the indigestibilities of a German supper *karte* annoy), the master of the house came and took the chair at my side, — as handsome, well-informed, and thoroughly courteous a host as Prussia can show. One of my fellow-travellers had acquainted him with my designs on the Harz country, and my inexperience in its language; and, with as much circumstantial civility as he could have used to detain the most desirable guest, in ten minutes of very good French, the whole plan was arranged for me, commodiously and inexpensively, and I was at leisure to satisfy as well as I could the curiosity of my friendly entertainer about the Eglintoun tournament. Upon the strength of this, the Coronation, and the London and Birmingham railroad, any one who could com-

municate was sure of being voted agreeable in Germany during the summer of 1839. Only six weeks later, while sitting among heaps of pressed grapes, at the door of a tavern at St. Goar, waiting the coming of a Rhine steamer, I saw the boatman who had rowed me from the Lurleiberg pause over his bottle of colourless and fragrant wine, and the untidy landlady let her knitting drop forgotten on her knee, while a white-haired and spectacled official belonging to that small town read aloud, from the "Rhein-und-Mosell-Blatt," the tragical issue of Mr. Pratt's upholstery, and the last Scottish freak of the Marquis of Waterford. To think of thus stumbling, as it were, upon Lord's Cricket Ground, and Limmer's Hotel, within sight of the Katz and the Schweitzer Thal!

But I am wandering away from the capital host, and capital coffee, and capital bed, at the Prinz Eugen. It was five o'clock in the morning when I woke and leaned out of my window. The air was clear and fresh enough to put Spleen itself into spirits — the sky without a cloud, and Day coming up so fast and so

brightly behind the minarets of the great church as to declare that a splendid sunrise was at hand. Splendid it was; and I hastened abroad to spend the half hour which was to elapse ere the vehicle and Jehu purveyed for my Harz excursion made their appearance, in prying about the little town. But I did not get beyond the Platz — a fine enclosure shaded with well-grown trees, surrounded with ancient houses, and commanded at its extremities by the Frauen Kirche and the Dom-Kirche—a pair of grand old buildings, which looked solemn, but not severe, in the cheerful but delicate light of early day. In a niche against one of the houses was a grim carved effigy, which, for collar, had been decked with a garland of withered flowers. Here and there the morning face of comfortable man or comely matron looking out of an open door, or through a diamond-bright window, made an impromptu Ostade, which would have been worth its hundreds in a picture-gallery. Few places so casually seen have left so clear and so cheerful an impression on my mind as Halberstadt. To judge from the

list of its manufactories it ought to be thriving as well as cheerful; nor should the lover of letters like it the less from its having been the residence of Gleim, the Mæcenas of some of Germany's best men of genius. To tempt the musician, I have but to say that the organist of the Dom-Kirche, whom we met at Brunswick, so loudly vaunted his instrument (but organists have that way with them), that Dr. Mendelssohn had consented but the day before my arrival to stop on his homeward journey to Leipsic, and give it a trial at the hour of fashionable London midnight, — or six in the morning.

Half an hour behind his time, a shabby little carriage, drawn by a shabby little pair of horses, jingled up to the door of the Prinz Eugen. But the equipage was well worth waiting for in virtue of its driver — as honest, good-natured, and intelligent a fellow as ever made a party of pleasure more pleasant. Small civil eyes with a touch of roguery in them, a walnut-brown complexion, a wide mouth containing a case of the whitest, cleanest teeth in North Germany, a stout jean shooting-jacket, and a tidy blue

cloth cap,—such ingredients made up my Jehu, who, to crown his perfections, could command a few words of French, a few of English, a few of Latin, and neither smoked nor wished to smoke. He deserved to belong to the town. We were presently rattling through its ancient gateway, and across the open plain towards the hill country. The morning kept its early promises — more inspiriting weather for a ramble could not be imagined—and those alone, who, during fifteen years, have only exchanged town for town, can comprehend the fulness of good-will with which I gave myself up to the influence of the hour and the scenery.

It was a day of pictures. For the first German mile we had groups of people harvesting in the fields, looking up as we passed to nod, and greet us with a good-humoured "*tag*," or hailing us from the primitive waggons of the country upon which they were clustered. Then, though wretchedly poor was the hamlet (I lost its name) at which Carl Alhelm stopped to give his horses and himself breakfast from the same junk of pumpernickel — it was a fair specimen of the

ruinous-picturesque. Shortly after leaving this, the hills, every one of which has its own quaint form and its own quaint legend, began to close in upon us; the fruit-trees on either side the road to be fewer, and the chesnuts more numerous. We were presently within sight of Wernigerode, a strange little walled town, overcrowed by its *schloss*—an imposing but heavy mass of building which loads the thickly-planted hill rising abruptly beyond the walls. Not far from this we encountered another painter's group. It was an itinerant puppet-show, the properties of which, dead and living, were crammed into a small covered cart, while the lank, knavish, gipsy-looking man, who throughout all the world presides over such vanities, trudged lazily on by its side. I have seen a Flight into Egypt by one of the ancient Flemish masters — Paul Brill, perhaps, or Breughel — with precisely such a landscape, and figures little more refined. Wernigerode was soon passed, and Altenrode too, of whose old convent there was no getting a peep among the high walls and thick-leaved plum-trees, and a good hour before mid-

day we were fairly on the skirts of the Wonderland; at Ilsenburg — a little red-roofed village nestling picturesquely in the opening of the valley, where the Ilse, clear and brown as a cairngorm stone, hurries out into the plain. At the "Rothe Forelle," *Anglicé*, Red Trout, — a pleasant little inn, — mules and guides are to be heard of, and, report says, to be paid for exorbitantly. In my own case it was not so: the breakfast was cheap and good; and my Jehu, from whom I was here to part company for the day, found out a guide for me, who, if less companionable, was no less honest and civil than himself.

There were other parties bound for the Brockenhaus — our station for the night — whom I had time to observe during my own breakfast, and while waiting till the guide should have dined. One pair in particular— an old man and a boy — made a singular contrast. Never did I see a more repulsive study of Age without respectability than the former — a lean, nimble, brawling fellow, for ever in a passion, who wore a long loose wrap-rascal, the shrunk sleeves of which showed the whole

of his enormous hands, and a cap perched upon, rather than covering, a profuse crop of ill-kept and coarse grizzled hair. But his face was the worst: the yellow and blood-shot eyes, the brindled complexion of scarlet and tawny, the dry thirsty mouth garnished with straggling teeth, and always agape to the misery of every one in the neighbourhood, told of debauchery as plainly as they could speak. His companion was a fair gracious-looking boy of fourteen, with a clear blue eye, rosy German cheeks, and a voice as shrill but twice as loud as a girl's. For a good five minutes after they had left The Red Trout I heard the hoarse bawl of the one, and the piercing answer of the other, as they pushed off towards the Brocken. It was a positive boon to be spared such company on the road.

My guide came. He, too, was an old man, but with his wise withered face and his white hair, his tidy blouse and his sheepskin knapsack, he looked like a palmer, when compared with the unclean roisterer who had just quitted us. In five minutes we were beyond the boundaries of

Ilsenburg, and, turning away from the stream, began to ascend a steep bank, close under the walls of a poor little grey church, built among the ruins of a monastery. This can now only be traced in a dusty and dark cellar, the mouth of which must be passed by all who would mount to the Ilsenstein. The path leads through a croft, which was as thickly spread with the lilac crocus as if it were a Nottingham meadow. Then comes a fir wood: huge stones shagged with moss, peering out capriciously on either side of the path; and among them the richest tufts of foxgloves I have ever seen. Where, indeed, should faëry-caps grow if not in the Harz country? Here and there, as we began to mount, an opening through the trees afforded a lovely prospect of the plain, dotted with clean red-roofed villages, and framed by the entrance of the valley. The Ilsenstein, passing which — as all the readers of Shelley's wonderful fragment from "Faust" know — the Witch, on the Walpurgis-night, saw

"—— the owl awake in the white moonshine,"

is a grand promontory of rock, jutting out into

the valley, and crowned with an iron cross, in memorial of the brave achievements of Count Stolberg's troop during the war. The view thence is superb. But with the best will in the world to surround myself with a visionary atmosphere, I could not do it. The day was too fine; the brawling of the stream, when we again joined it, too merry and musical; and the only thing to be noted as in the least "eerie," was the stillness of the columnar pine woods through which we mounted, — broken, not by bird or breeze, but by the clicking of the locked wheels of the charcoal burners' carts as they slipped down to the valley below—a measured but unfamiliar sound. As we ascended higher, the cessation of this noise was supplied by the perpetual bubbling and tinkling of countless runnels of water, that creep away under the stones, which shoulder each other as countlessly and closely as if the Gnomes had made a compact that not a tree should have room to grow: whence an unusual number of writhen serpent-like roots forced, as it were, out of the steep bank, and of distorted trunks, which, at even-fall,

might serve, in default of Kobolds or other such company, to scare and menace the fanciful. In spite of these, however, the ascent of the Brocken, even to one endowed with the most willing of imaginations, is a rough and picturesque walk of three hours and a half, up a tolerably steep and very stony hill—nothing more.

The little plain at the top, like all mountain plains, is harsh and barren in its physiognomy: the inn, a strong and gloomy house of refuge, one story high. The wind was keen enough, even on that still afternoon, to intimate how it *could* roar about the thick logs and timbers of which the Brockenhaus is built. Hard by the inn stands a tower, also built of massive wood, and the view thence is as magnificent as expanse can make it: small points, which the eye must strain itself to see honestly, standing for towns; hair lines for roads, and tufts of moss for reaches of wood. There is nothing, however, either in distance or foreground, to render it comparable to the panorama commanded by the great Winterberg in Saxon Switzerland. Had I enjoyed the tower to myself, nevertheless, I could have lingered there, as long as daylight lasted, to exercise

the powers of discovery for which such a wide prospect gives fair occasion; but I had at least twenty fellow-gazers; and what with the hubbub made by them, while hacking their names on the timber battlements, contradicting each other about this *schloss* or the other spire, at boatswain pitch — hallooing to their mates down below, or playing violent tricks with each other — a noisier score of scenery-hunters

"You would not find in Christendie."

They were, for the most part, a party of students from Göttingen, — fine lawless fellows, unkempt and loosely dressed, with every vagary of travelling-cap and knapsack, tobacco *beitel*, and fore-finger ring, — more dirty, more good-natured, more jovial than any thing of the same order to be found in England. If they had planned during a whole course of class and lecture-work, to come and "make a night of it" on the Brocken, they could not more thoroughly have carried their purposes into execution. The host, who sat in the outer hall of the house, making bird traps, seemed to concern himself little for their comfort; and, now drinking,

now smoking, now chasing each other, they scrambled hither and thither, to the Hexen altar, and the other stations of a Harz pilgrimage, till the setting of the sun and the bitter sharpness of the mountain air drove them under cover.

Were I able to do it justice, I should hardly venture to expatiate upon that set or burial of the sun, among such intensely mazarine blue clouds, as the ancient artists sometimes introduced into their landscapes with more enterprise than success. After all was grey, there remained still a long evening to be got through in a comfortless apartment, with no luxury of fare attainable to beguile the time. The party of *bürschen* withdrew into a room of their own; and there were left in the *speise-saal* with me, the aged Iniquity I had seen at Ilsenburg, his companion with the childish face and voice; another youth, a regular and respectable specimen of the German traveller; and a fourth, who, after his own pattern, was as pretty an example of a rough diamond as one could desire. He might

be some twenty-one years old or thereabouts, — stalwart, thick-set, clean-limbed, and bullet-headed, succinctly done up in a sand and salt-coloured coat, the laps of which buttoned behind in a manner more original than becoming; — with breeches and gaiters of the same. His fist was as huge as that of Duke Adolph of Gueldres, in Rembrandt's marvellous portrait at Berlin; his stentorian voice never was still; his thick utterance was to be ascribed to the loss of two front teeth, which gave a peculiar villany of impudence to his face; and when the huge bull-dog belonging to the Brockenhaus, Cerberus by name, nestled up to the side of his chair, and lifting up a surly head, showed a hair-lip, the similarity of expression between the human and the canine visages was as strong as any thing in Hood's inimitable sketches of Comparative Anatomy. Man and dog — alike burly and savage — were the very figures for a Harz adventure.

Rough as my companions presently proved themselves to be, there was none of that insolence in all their riot, which makes the young

Englishman, when unchained, or, according to his own parlance, "out on a lark," often so intolerable. If they bawled for wine, it was that the foreigner might share; if they threatened the host with extinction because he had no cards, it was because *we* could not play; and on my withdrawing myself from their clamour, to turn over that motley record, the "Traveller's Book," I was neither molested by word, look, or sign; nor was the orgie, when at its climax, made an excuse for the slightest uncivil freedom.

This unexpected observance of the humanities by a party so thoroughly wild, and by contrast made striking, when I thought of my neighbour at the Brunswick Festival dinner, was further illustrated — at least Fancy would have it so — by the greasy pages of the *Fremdenbuch*, to which I betook myself; the four being now deep in a game not unlike the Italian *morra*. Teazed as I was with their riot, disgusted by the hoarse shrieks of the old grey-haired man, who seemed the most unruly of the party, I think I was yet more vexed by the stupidities, and worse, to which

English signatures were annexed in the "Strangers' Book." Enough high-flown German enthusiasm there was, no doubt;—doubtless, too, some German grossness;—but while I stumbled upon traces of almost every singer and dancer belonging to the Brunswick Opera, some of the names, of course, garnished with quotations, however silly, harmlessly expressive of some feeling for the scene,—it was vexatious to find Englishmen of title and family announcing their presence in one of Nature's high places, by dull and trivial jokes, which showed how little admiration they could have brought thither. Captain This chronicled the day when he "jumped Jim Crow on the Brocken." Sir That, in tracing his route, wrote himself down "as having come from nowhere, and going to Hell." The whole truth should not be spoken at all times, and in all places, says Lord Chesterfield!—With such humiliating evidences before me, I felt I had little right to quarrel with the confusion worse confounded, of shouts, exclamations, and *tisch-lieder*, which bade fair to deafen me as the advance of even-

ing wrought them up to a *crescendo*. By this time the sky had grown pitch black; and in the rare intervals, when a moment's pause permitted its being heard, there came up from the plain below, a murmur of the night-wind, as quiet as a whisper, but as deep in tone as the lowest pedal pipe of an organ. Save for that intimation, it would have been far easier to fancy one's self in Auerbach's Cellar, than on the top of the haunted mountain; for the merry ditties of Zumsteeg, and Eisenhofer, and Blum, and Osthoff, and the explosions of laughter which burst out on every side, had quite too much of rough earthly glee in them, to be for an instant accepted as the Satanic music of a Walpurgis night.

These part-songs are too little known in England, as one of the most national and not least engaging features in modern German music. We have rested upon our glees with a complacency so exclusive as to make us overlook what our neighbours were about. I question whether these German efforts were known to a dozen professors in England before

the arrival of the brothers Herrmann. The latter even were by many, who should have known better, strangely confounded with the Tyrolese minstrels; though their classical quartett playing (the best rehearsed and understood I have heard on this side the water) must have puzzled those fancying that the wild national air and the well-constructed composition were "all one concern." Among the French I am inclined to believe that the amount of real taste for and intimacy with German music is even now little less partial. A periodical critic, speaking of a concert given at Frankfort last autumn, which some untoward spirits wished to disturb by singing "La Marseillaise," in proof of the French sympathies of the Germans, says, "And this was in the midst of their own favourite music — in the midst of a classical programme, combining the severe and the wild — '*des morceaux*' of Beethoven, and Tyrolese airs!"

Nothing can be much more ignorant in its flippancy than this; as if the popular music of Germany had not been contributed by its best hands! It is forty years since Zelter (best

known in England as Goethe's correspondent) and his friend Fleming founded at Berlin a congregation of staid elderly men, who met once a month to sit down to a good supper, and to diversify the pleasures of the table by singing four-part songs, principally composed by themselves.* Their number was forty; and far the larger part of it composed of amateurs or men in office. It was an original statute that no one was eligible as a member who was not a composer, a poet, or a singer. During his lifetime Zelter was their president and principal composer; and in no branch of art, perhaps, did his peculiar talent evidence itself so brightly as in these convivial effusions, where humour, raciness, a masterly employment of the limited materials at his disposal, and a fine sense of

* I am not able to mention the date of Haydn's "Cat's Fugue," in four parts, but I think it must belong to an earlier period, and in any case is valuable as an evidence of grave science applied to the popular uses of mirth; — I have heard too, unless I greatly mistake, of comic part-songs as well as *quodlibets* by Sebastian Bach. I feel it, however, particularly incumbent here to remind the reader that I am not writing history, but sketching impressions.

the poetry he took in hand distinguish him among his contemporaries. Goethe used to give his songs to be composed by Zelter; and many of them were sung at the Berlin "Liedertafel" before they were printed or known elsewhere. Fleming also contributed some fair musical compositions—that to Horace's ode, "Integer vitæ," amongst others.

It was in the year 1815, or thereabouts, that Berger, Klein, and a younger generation of musicians founded a young "Liedertafel" society, on the same principle, and for the same number of members. Friedrich Forster wrote some very pretty songs for it. Hoffmann, the novel writer and *kapellmeister*, made it one scene of his strange and extravagant existence; and left behind him there an immortal comic song—"Turkische Musik," the words by Friedrich Forster. In general, a gayer and more spirited tone pervaded this younger society than belonged to their classical seniors. It was the practice of both bodies to invite guests on holiday occasions; and by the younger part-singers ladies were admitted twice a year.

Nothing could be sprightlier or pleasanter — a little extra noise allowed for — than these latter meetings.

It would seem as if the old German love of corporate processions — the old affection for guilds and burgherships — found an expression in the societies to which this couple of institutions gave rise. They were not long in spreading far and wide. The good suppers became of less integral consequence; original compositions were not always attainable; but in every town it was natural to collect the younger men of all classes, for the purpose of singing together. A regular system of organisation, of division and subdivision, has arranged itself. The town societies in combination form provincial assemblies, where many hundreds come together. In the north of Germany the large class of young men, who are either schoolmasters or organists in the towns and villages, or are educated as such at the normal schools, have societies of their own, and periodical celebrations.

The provincial festivals of these societies are held in the good time of the year, so that open

air performances are practicable. A fine site, too, is a thing always chosen. Not very long before my Harz ramble, the Liedertafeln societies of that district had been holding a congress at Blankenburg. The natural man of the German, indeed, which seems to require a pipe every hour, and a refection at every milestone, seems never, by the indulgence of his appetites, to be coarsened out of his love of Nature. He loves a fine view to smoke over;—will make a riot in the years of his cub-*hood* in such a sanctuary as the top of the Brocken over night, and still earnestly enjoy the panorama and the mountain-walk in the morning. One might have thought that the beer-cellar and "the bosky bourne" must appeal to a totally different class of pilgrims; but it does not seem so. There is a picturesque spirit in all German public festivities, to which we never approach nearer than by rifling conservatories of their flowers, to die in the stifling and oleaginous atmosphere of a ball-room. These Liedertafeln societies take part in other celebrations not their own. When Schiller's statue was inau-

gurated in Stuttgart, the singing bodies of all the towns in the districts round about poured in through the gates of the town, one after the other, each with its banners and its music, till the separate chords, to speak fancifully, united in a grand chorus in the market-place. And while there exists a well-trained army of volunteer choristers ready to be called into action on all occasions — it need not be pointed out how different it is in quality to the body of subordinates at once semi-professional and untaught, at whose mercy lies so much of the best music ever to be heard in England — I should say, *laid;* for part-singing is now flourishing with us like the bean-tree in the Faëry Tale.

It is needless, again, to remark how the works which make a whole great people vocal, — "a whole country" (to quote a forcible expression of the accomplished musical friend to whom I am here indebted for my facts) "absolutely heave with harmony,"— must have a value and an interest in more aspects than one. If we lay aside the sober and serious compositions of the elderly gentlemen, and, on the other, the

familiar "Crambambuli," and other such ditties of the *bürschen* (musical weeds worth nobody's owning), there is on every hand, and in every guild, much to interest. To offer an instance or two likely to be familiar to the English — Music has nothing nobler in her stores than the battle songs in which the harmonies of Weber and the burning words of Körner are united. We sit by our firesides, it is true, and know not the sound of an enemy's cavalry in our streets, nor the booming of an enemy's cannon without our gates; and hence are touched only faintly by the spell of the soul within them; but it is impossible coldly to listen to the masculine chords and bold modulations of "Lutzow's Wild Chase," and the "Sword Song," and the "Husarenlied." Again, we have taken home to ourselves and half nationalised "Am Rhein*," among our

* As the Rhine Song is here spoken of as a composition, the name of its composer may be given (on Berlin authority), as it has been attributed by some to Haydn. It is now said to belong to the same Schulz who was employed on a far less ungenial task, the setting to music of the translated choruses of Racine's "Athalie." He was a *kapellmeister* at Copenhagen.

"Black-eyed Susan"s and "Rule Britannia"s, because of its spirit and beauty; — though we cannot feel, save dramatically and by going out of ourselves as well as from home, the joviality and mirth of those who dwell in a wine-land, or the kindling of such a spirit as moved the army of Liberators on their return from victory, when within sight of Ehrenbreitstein, to burst out with one consent into that noble melody which was heard with little ceasing for two days and nights while the band was passing over the river!

Honour, then, to the part-songs of Germany, and better acquaintance with them! is not the worst toast one could propose at a glee club. But I must say, that, beyond having harmonised our "Rule Britannia" in one edition of their "Orpheus," or Part-Singer's *Vade Mecum*, my friends the Germans trouble themselves far too little with our vocal music. By the surprise, as well as delight, which I have seen our madrigals excite in them, it is plain that the reciprocal indifference has been mutual. It ought to be so no longer. If these be not great days of creation, they ought to be good days

of acquisition.—That long rambling vocal *solos* are ineffective and absurd, and that to cut up a poem into as many movements as there are lines is to betray want of power over forms and progressions, the English glee-writer might learn from such well-knit and admirable compositions as the "Rastlose Liebe" of Spohr, or the beautiful recent productions of Mendelssohn. The German composer of vocal quartetts might learn to lay stress upon such delicacy of effect as is to be gained by the admixture of female voices from such elegant and charming strains as Stevens's "Ye spotted snakes," and Horsley's "See the chariot." I would alike give over to separate and utter demolition, the rambling accompanied *scenas* and songs which some of our classical writers have devised for the exhibition of a bass or counter-tenor voice, and the instrumental *polaccas* and waltz tunes by Blum and Kuffner, and even Eisenhofer (who is sometimes a delicious melodist*),

* As in his "Schlaf wohl," one of the most lulling tunes in the catalogue of serenades; in its luxurious sweetness little inferior to the charming theme, "Secondate aurette amici," in "Cosi fan tutte."

which disfigure their collections. Enough remains on both sides to be of use and help to the rapidly increasing schools of popular music in England and Germany.

This digression is to be understood as filling a chasm in my chronicle. I do not pretend that all these thoughts and fancies arranged themselves in my mind during the long hours of that evening in which the familiar "Der Schmidt" of Conradin Kreutzer, and a merry waltz by Blum, with its "Hop-sa-sa" burden, were heard but faintly from the next chamber — though sung by a dozen voices — so furious was the noise made by my four companions. Surely never such an outcry came out of so few bottles of wine,—only three, I think, being exhausted by them, and that so foolishly weak in quality as to be almost warrantable under the Temperance seal. Drunk they became, however, to all intents and purposes; and though I had begun by a resolution of holding out to the end as a spectator, about half-past ten the uproar became so ear-splitting that I was fain to quit the company for bed. My ill stars ap-

portioned my *zimmer* next to the room where the revel went on; and though I tried again and again to resort to the "Fantasy Pieces" of Hoffmann, which I had chosen as pocket-companion, and again and again endeavoured to read on the Brocken, as I had agreed with myself I would do, his fantastic but deeply penetrating analysis of Mozart's "Don Juan" — it was all in vain. The table was banged by fists and heels till I thought it must break — the chairs launched hither and thither so furiously that it was a marvel, at morning-light, to find one leg still united to its partner. Had the wind been provoked to come forth in his utmost fury, he must for once have been outroared. Once or twice mine host tried to quiet a riot so particularly unseasonable to those who were to rise before day-dawn; once the *stube-mädchen* put her head within the door. If piercing noise could take a form, she must have drawn herself back in the condition of the Headless Barmaid of the goblin tale. It was an hour past midnight ere the unruly pack chose to go to bed. By this time they were all so tipsy — the singers into the

bargain — that to stow each in his appointed lodgement was not easy. Up and down the corridor which divides the Brockenhaus they rushed like a menagerie let loose, pelting each other with their boots, or fighting to keep together or asunder for the night. Two of them, in one of these conflicts, at last burst my door open, and threw all their drunken weight on my bed. Luckily, my light had been extinguished for some time, and I could take means, by the aid of the tough vine-branch with which I had trudged up the Brocken, to free myself of the intruders without getting into a personal brawl. Considerably stung, as daylight showed their faces to be, by the random strokes necessary to my deliverance, the pair stumbled out as incoherently as they had tumbled in; and at half-past one in the morning, after some hours of irritating exercise (for to this does the endurance of such brutal and violent noise amount), I was at liberty to sleep as well as I could, on the fact that I had no idea of the meaning of the word "*tapage*" till I passed the night on the Brocken in the midst of a rout of Göttingen students.

CHAP. II.

RÜBELAND.

Morning on the Brocken. — Impenetrable Atmosphere. — Sunrise — Picturesque Mountain-walk to Schiercke. — Drive from Schiercke to Elbingerode. — Church Tower; — A Fantasy on Forms. — Frightful Road. — Rübeland; — Its Delicacies and its Shows. — The Baumanshöhle. — Travelling Parties. The Grotto. — Music underground. — Illuminations. — Echo. — Triumphal March. — The Dinner; the Reckoning after it. — Absurd Predicament. — North German Goodwill. — Unsuspiciousness and Art. — Mrs. Grundy not among the Amateurs. — Drive from Rübeland to Blankenburg. — Road Inspector. — Blankenburg.

During the three hours of sleep allowed me, old remembrances and new impressions combined themselves into such a whimsically distinct mosaic, that the transcript of the same would possibly not be the dullest page of these journals. But, according to Dr. Watts, the telling of dreams is the sluggard's occupation, and in the Harz country at least few deserve that character. At five o'clock the inmates of

the Brockenhaus were all shaken out of their heavy sleep, to be in time for the far-famed sunrise. One by one the spirits of the last night's orgie made their appearance, looking neither much dirtier nor more debauched for the carouse than they had done the previous evening, and alertly eager for the spectacle they had mounted to see. It was soon evident, however, that of this they were to be disappointed. The aspect of matters on issuing forth reminded me of a graphic expression in Mr. Monck Mason's account of the ascent of the great Nassau balloon, which he described as at midnight silently cleaving its way through black marble. No less dense and substantial seemed the dingy white fog in the heart of which the summit of the Brocken was imbedded and which only gave way a span's breath before us. Having blundered all round the Prospect Tower ere we came to the side of entrance, we mounted to the summit. In vain; the same world was there as below; and the only appearance or sensation, which could possibly suggest the idea of its ever being dissipated, was the sudden passage of some detached scarf

of mist, which trailed so close to the face as to make one aware of the neighbourhood of dampness in motion. The strange apparition of hands protruding from no visible bodies, of heads (*such* heads!) without shoulders, and of coat tails, seemingly to hang self-supported in the air, were presented in the area of a very few feet, more strikingly even than on the memorable eve of our young Queen's visit to the city, when half London lost its way. All that could be discovered of the progress of dawn was the change in this provoking envelope, from whitish grey to greyish white; and as our watches announced a quarter to six, the dimmest possible tinge in the east, which took a redder glory, when some fold of the mist, parting for an instant, opened out fleecy depths and vistas so interminable as to defy all hope of their ever vanishing. For one little moment, however, as I strained my eyes towards the quarter of promise, the veil was wholly rent, and a brilliant golden eye showed itself, as if to make disappointment greater, by indicating the existence of no ordinary splendour; but, in

another instant, down and round and over us on every side, swept the all-covering envelope; and the sun was seen no more. An hour was spent in vain expectation, until the very landlord of the Brockenhaus, more conscientious than some of his calling, announced that it was clearly a waste of time for any one to linger there longer, the show being postponed till another day! Such postponements, he added, fell to the lot of five travellers out of every six who hoped to assist at the far-famed sunrise from the Brocken.

The bill for night's lodging, supper, cup of morning coffee, and the refreshment of my old guide, was somewhere under the amount of four shillings; an apology being affixed to the "*Rechnung*" for the dearness of the charges, owing to the necessity of all provisions being carried up to the hill-top from a very great distance. This mighty sum discharged, the next step was to Schiercke, where Carl and his carriage were waiting; so, leaving behind the rout of *bürschen* busily resuming their staves and their knapsacks, I set forth, with a boy to carry

my wallet. The scramble down the Brocken was far more striking than the ascent had been. It was this way that Faust and Mephistopheles mounted; and the masses of rock which stared out from among the larch trees on either side of the rough path — many of them in their winding-sheets of mist, looking as grim and chill as Lapland idols,—were huge in size, and fantastic in their forms, though still not to compare with the fragments which lie about and overhang the Elbe in Saxon Switzerland. Some of the pine trees have been able to grow to a superb height and bulk, from their not shouldering each other so closely as on the other side of the mountain. That morning, too, the underwood was so netted over with gossamer, as almost to lose every form of foliage: and, as we stepped down from boulder to boulder, — my guide keeping the cold out by his pipe, — through the wet and cottony atmosphere which still formed round us an impervious screen, our rapid and silent progress had far more the air of a journey through a land of enchantment than any part of the previous day's walk. It was eight o'clock when

we reached Schierke, a miserable little village. There I dismissed my guide; and, candied over with hoar-frost during my descent, rejoined the vehicle and its Jehu.

The road we took is by the side of the Bode, a cheerful and tumultuous mountain-brook, overhung in places by fine wooded banks, and not brawling so loudly as to drown the pleasant and lulling tinkle of the cow and sheep bells, which produces an effect not unlike a harp prelude on the upper strings. The influence of this was hardly to be resisted; and it was more asleep than awake that I drove on for the next hour and a half, till jolted beyond all power of rest or day-dreaming, as we neared Elbingerode. The round to which Tony Lumpkin treated Mrs. Hardcastle was a bowling-green compared with the road as it enters and issues from that large, naked, bleak-looking village. Of this, I remember little beyond a severe-looking, square, lumpish church, — its tower crowned with that Saracenic black cap, which seems in the Harz district as inevitably the finish for all buildings of which Chance has

been the architect, as the extinguisher is everywhere in France. Somewhere or other I have encountered a speculation upon nationality of form and style carried through all the arts; — showing, for instance, how *point* (without play upon the words) and neatness characterise alike French poetry, and painting, and costume, and architecture, and take the form of rhythm in French music: — how a richer and sweeter harmony pervades all the creations of the South; and is to be felt in the expression of the Florentine painters, and the colour of the Venetians—in the delicious measures of the versifiers, and in the whole tissue, whether popular or scientific, of Italian music. As I lay back in the hay-strewn stable-yard of the little Gasthaus at Elbingerode, at once kept awake and lulled by the chime of a quartett of flails, while my trusty driver stopped to rest his horses after the last dislocating half hour, the recurrence of this terminal form in so many of the less-pretending buildings of North Germany recalled to me the perhaps wiredrawn fancy I have journalised; and I puzzled myself in vain,

unable to hit upon any one word which should indicate the genuine and distinctive peculiarities of German, as distinguished from French and Italian art and fancy. On some one such unbroken thread, I am persuaded, do the poetry, the painting, and the music of every country lie more closely side by side than their separate historians have taken the trouble to conceive; and he who could analyse the texture and trace the direction of the support and link proper to each race and country, would perform a service of no common interest and value. The most superficial thinker upon the spirit, rather than the technicalities of Art, cannot penetrate a hair's depth beneath the surface without being lured on and tantalized by indications of central originating causes, which remain unchanged through the revolutions wrought by Time upon the outer world. It were a life's labour to follow out and combine these; and largely must the labourer be endowed with the divining rod of Fancy, as well as with the mining tools and the line and the plummet of Reason: but the labour is worth the pains.

Thus, letting Imagination take the tower of Elbingerode church as text for what is possibly but a dream, the half hour allotted to baiting was soon over. By this time the sun was very warm, and, provokingly enough, as we receded from the Brocken, the mist slowly dissipated, till the summit became as clear as it had shone when luring me to climb it while I drove along the road to Halberstadt. To extricate a pair of wheels and a pair of horses from Elbingerode, is nothing short of a feat; such a track I never passed over, save once, in a rough scrambling drive to shooting quarters, among the hills of Glamorganshire. Shortly after issuing from the little town, the road leaves the plain, and again joining the Bode, runs along the side of a valley, till, in the cleft which the stream has formed between grey and picturesque rocks, not unlike those in Middleton Dale, Derbyshire, the little village of Rübeland is seen, — a clean, warm, cheerful-looking haunt of comfort and refreshment, particularly agreeable to reach at noon-tide, after a scanty breakfast, taken at the unnatural hour

of five A. M., and seven hours of exposure to the most bracing air man can breathe.

My driver's face, it was easy to perceive, was popular in those parts; for the landlord of the "Golden Lion"—in shape and visage the very model of an English tailor—bustled to and fro on the appearance of Carl Alhelm's shabby vehicle, with an alacrity which nothing short of two coaches and four would command in England. I should have a capital dinner, he declared — trout of course (the trout of the Harz is capital), and a bottle of his best wine;—and, while my dinner was getting ready, of course I would see the Baumanshöhle, the most interesting of the grottos which make Rübeland a notorious station. I assented:—then, of course too, I would have extra lights, to show the grotto to its best advantage,—and music in it, too? When not particularly anxious or interested in the matter, or in that moody and meditative humour which makes one splenetic or intolerant, it is good wisdom to let guides and *ciceroni* take their own way. The *taxe*, too, for all these luxuries and entertainments,

was but a trifle; so the trout was to be put in the pan, and the Marcobrunner in the Bode, and the village rummaged for its band, — some twenty men in number.

Before they could be collected, two other parties arrived at Rübeland, and made haste to avail themselves of the opportunity to see the Höhle in its court dress. We mounted the steep bank at the back of the inn, each with a *kittel*, or smock frock of black glazed calico, on his arm, and were presently at the mouth of the cave. Under cover of this were waiting the musicians bespoken for my first and only benefit concert, — a set of good-humoured manly-looking fellows, a good deal besmirched with the labours of the forge and the mine. As they lay about among their cornets, trombones, and other brass instruments, some in shade, some in shine, — they made a capital painter's study of "wayfarers at the mouth of a cavern." I was much amused with one of the parties of grotto-seekers who were to bear me company. This was a gentleman with two ladies, not very young, odd-looking, and curiously tidy.

The gentleman turned up his pantaloons, to be out of danger from the drippings of the stalactites which were to be found on the floor of the cave; the lady bound a handkerchief over her cap, with as anxious a precision as if it had been a *fazzoletto* for a fancy ball. It was not this, however, that so much struck me, as the curiosity, earnest to rapacity, evidenced in all the three faces, which told a pleasant tale of powers of enjoyment, retained in all their freshness, and of credulity willing to believe every thing at a moment's word and warning. They were the most incessant talkers too I ever encountered; and from the moment when their carriage stopped at the door of the "Golden Lion," till the moment when mine drove away from it, the time of dinner inclusive, a continuous trio of two *soprani* and one baryton was never out of my ears for one solitary moment. Of the other three I have more to say presently.

After a few moments, our musicians, in single file, dropped one by one into the hole, down which too we were to vanish. Then each

of us, bearing his little tin lamp, began to pick his way down a steep and broken descent, into the bowels of the earth, with that stumbling caution, which is always laid aside some two minutes after daylight is fairly left. I am not going to course the reader through the wonders of the grotto, — the Organ, and the Lion's Head, and the Bust, and the Skeleton Hand, — which Nature and Imagination never fail between them to carve out in all such situations. The awe and mystery of the spot were entirely dissipated by the enthusiastic "*Ach!*" and "*Himmel!*" and "*Wunderhübsch!*" of my companions; and when, upon the principal guide whistling a signal, a cross of light revealed itself in the distance, and the Rübelanders struck up a Prussian march and quick step (one of those things the sight of which in an old music book transports the mind back to such strangely different times), their screams of rapture very nearly hindered me from profiting by the music. Fatiguing as is such violent admiration, it is more tolerable than sulkiness or apathy; and as the solemnities of Nature

were out of reach, it was as well to content one's self with the whimsicalities of Man.

The music produced a fair effect. In another mood, I should have wished for less lively and common-place strains, in the midst of all those dimly seen and quaintly writhen rock figures:—I should have bespoken the "Amplius," or "Confitebor," written by Beethoven for brass instruments alone, and performed at his own funeral. Yet perhaps there might have been less difference between the reverberations of a Strauss melody, and one of those dark and pompous burial strains, thus heard, than would have been felt in the aisles of a cathedral, or the saloons of a palace. The best got-up scene is often disappointing in effect, when Nature is one of the elements. I have always mistrusted open air exhibitions (even when directed by a Goethe for a classical court such as Weimar's,) as being only one degree more probable and poetical in effect, than the groups of opera milkmaids who used to pirouette among the laurels and lawns of Holly Lodge, on the anniversaries kept by

its late jovial and hospitable proprietress. The last exhibition in the Baumanshöhle was the burning of sundry blue lights, which diffused a strange and infernal glare throughout the vault, bringing all its darkest nooks and recesses into full notice, and making it a fit scene for the demon court of Ahrimanes and the resuscitation of Astarte in "Manfred." I never, till I returned to upper earth, knew the full value of "the light of common day."

By this time we were all desperately hungry, and the provisions of mine host of the "Golden Lion" recurred to me most comfortably. One other wonder of Rübeland remained. A most articulate and pertinacious Echo inhabits the crags on the side of the Bode, opposite to the Baumanshöhle; and as we walked down from the grotto, the men of Rübeland formed before us in procession, playing marches and *galoppes* as they went — the Voice from the hill mocking them all the way. In such state we arrived at the little inn, where Boniface, thinking to make a sulky Englishman comfortable according to his own liking, and turning a deaf ear to all

my sociable inclinations, handed me off to a little clean bed-room, glaring with sunlight, and there set before me the promised treat. I could not help thinking I was dining after the fashion of the monarch in "the Song of Sixpence," when, by way of a last indulgence, the village band ranged itself round the window, and gave one more hearty flourish of their trumpets — "an appeal," thought I, "to the long purse which my countrymen are presumed to carry." So availing myself of the interval between the *forellen* (trout) and the eternal *Kalb'sbraten* (roast veal) of a German dinner, I opened the window, determined for once in my life to make myself popular by an act of munificence.

Out came my purse — out came its contents; when, at that moment, a conviction in which I know not whether dismay or diversion predominated, flashed on my mind. I had left a good half of the *thalers* apportioned for my Harz journey of three days, with my heavy baggage, at Halberstadt; and if I paid for my trout and my trumpet-ry with the most laudable at-

tention to economy, it stared me in the face that I should then have some twenty *groschen*, and no more, left for the remainder of my tour. The thorough absurdity of such a falling-short after such an extra regale was all but irresistible; but it was vexatious, owing to carelessness, to be compelled to stint the good-humoured musicians of Rübeland: and some will comprehend the feelings of relief with which I saw the last of them disappear, slowly, and, I dare say, disappointed. Then came a moment's brown study; and, but for the summons of the landlord, who, armed with a dish of plum jelly, recommended me to turn and finish my roast meat while it was hot, I might have leaned out into the still, sunshiny village street, pondering ways and means for the rest of the afternoon.

Pondering, however, would do no good: the fact was clear that my money was all but done, and only half of my Harz round accomplished. I called my *kutscher*, and interrogated him as to the possibility of his delivering me that night at the Prinz Eugen. His horses would not do it, he said, and he could not in conscience take me

home without my having seen the most beautiful thing in the Harz — the Ross-trappe. In truth, the brilliancy of the weather, and the rarity of such an excursion, made the thoughts of abridging my first plan thoroughly distasteful. So I sent away my dinner, paid my bill, again counted over my *groschen*, and again leaned out of the window in search of an idea. Some money was to be raised, it was clear; — but from whom?

A laugh, in six parts, with a brisk *obligato* accompaniment of knives and forks, from the sociable party in the parlour, determined me. I resolved to try what the compassion of my fellow grotto-hunters would do. As I stood with the handle of the door betwixt the rooms in my hand, a hundred tales of the frolics of impudent travelling Englishmen came back to me, and I caught a glimpse in the glass of a person too thoroughly disreputable-looking, by reason of early rising, exposure to the air, and the climbing of muddy ladders, to stand any chance of being believed or assisted; even if he could keep down the strong sense of diver-

sion, which the contrast between the parade before and the petition after dinner excited. A moment more, and I should have lost command of my gravity. So I threw open the door, and, by the aid of the better French than my own of a lady of the party, managed to make my difficulty known. Before my tale was half ended, before I could unfold my passport, or a single authentication to encourage the benevolent, or to explain where I came from and whither I was going, every purse and pocket-book was out on the table: — every one was pressing offers of service upon me with a wholesale liberality which it warms the heart to remember; and so earnestly, as well as unanimously, that I had to raise my voice to the highest pitch to give my name and address in Berlin. No one would look at a single corroboratory document, and I might have levied contributions to any amount. Of course I preferred aid from those belonging to the place of my immediate destination; and having helped myself as moderately as possible out of their store, we shook hands and parted, in the midst of a peal

of merriment and mutual good wishes, which are already like things in a dream. I might have spared the egotism of this little adventure, did I not hope that an expression of hearty gratitude might, by some freak of chance, haply meet the eye of those who rendered me such essential service; and were not this timely aid, given to an utter stranger at a moment's warning, too closely illustrative of the unaffected and unsuspecting goodwill which, as far as I know, distinguishes social intercourse in Germany, to be omitted from pages in which Manners as well as Music are sketched.

The health and prosperity, indeed, of the best music of Germany — that of combination — is largely owing to the friendly unsuspiciousness which allowed me to be so seasonably helped, and which manifests itself in a freedom and ease of intercourse between the sexes, bearing upon Art with direct and important influences. Mrs. Grundy is rarely heard of among the young ladies and young gentlemen of the country, however pertinaciously they choose to sing choruses together or practise the

harmony-music of instruments. As a friend of mine remarked, when adverting to the hinderance which manners, as well as artificial refinements, present to a full and hearty combination of the amateurs of England or France, "the obstacle, in both countries, is the difficulty your ladies find in moving alone, without servants, gentlemen, and other accompaniments *obligato*. Yet this is almost indispensable to such an undertaking, unless it be confined entirely to the inferior classes. Now our damsels, even at night, if there are three or four of them, and an old spinster in the rear, will roam about and fear nothing; or the singing gentlemen will accompany them home; at the bare idea of which every Frenchman's morals would go into fits." There is something in this worthy of honest attention. We cannot, perhaps, return on our track so as to assume a more primitive form of manners; and no audacity is so unbridled, no affectation so pernicious, as the courage and the artlessness of an acted simplicity. The uneasy shame of the first adult English waltzers was a more dangerous profligacy than the unconscious

effrontery of many a professional *danseuse*, who has been trained to her exhibitions from her cradle. While exciting our energies for the diffusion of Music, as a desirable and attainable household guest, we shall labour in vain till something is done towards rendering it independent of all cumber, and formality, and expense; to make it a thing of daily love and custom, and not of show. We have better voices than the Germans, and a fair musical organization; but the scientific training of patient study is not less wanting among us, than the social support of a system of manners which shall give room to the art to move easily; and by detaching it from an exclusive association with paid and public exhibitions, deliver it from the undistinguishing ban under which Intellect and Morality have so unfairly placed it.

I saw nothing more beautiful in the Harz country than my drive from Rübeland to Blankenburg. The weather continued genial and cloudless, and the instance of goodwill I have recorded was surely enough to make the dullest of spirits sunshiny. Thus, let no one take my word for it, that Bodenthal is the most beautiful

of villages; niched though it be beneath high crags dotted with pine trees, and with its group of marble works, which have availed themselves of the "water privilege," to stand for the never-omitted water-mill of our landscape painters. But such it seemed. Nor dare I aver that the hilly miles from Bodenthal to Blankenburg, undulating between warm sloping meadows, covered with noble oaks, whose lower branches sweep the ground, are a richer passage of country than could be found on many a mail-road in England — say the valley of the Severn. Yet, as Blankenburg is approached, and the country opens, I thought I had never seen view so beautiful, — the heavy and quaint-looking castle of the town laid along rather than seated on a knoll above it, and the Regenstein, serving as frames to a wide reach of country. As we were driving from Hüttenrode the way was blocked up by a heavy wain, loaden with sweet and fresh hay. From the back of this a man jumped out — in face, voice, and dress the very double of the Ettrick Shepherd — and offered Carl an armful of provender for his horses in return for a ride and a little good company. He was the inspec-

tor of the roads in the district, and, getting up beside my Jehu, began, at a noisy rate, to do his part in making me feel at home, by telling me all the news "of the country side." I tried my best to catechise him about the meeting of the Liedertafeln societies of the district, which only shortly before had taken place at Blankenburg; but as I did not understand one word in ten he said, of course what he answered was not worth journalising. He had plenty to tell me on that subject, however, as well as about the excellence of the crops, the good condition of Carl's horses, and the roughness of the road. The last was enough to make even a bunch of thistles palatable to the poor fatigued beasts who had dragged us over it; — how they must have relished, then, their fresh and fragrant supper! A hundred yards before we entered Blankenburg, he leaped from the box, and disappeared among a gang of men at work, with a promise that I should find a good supper, a good bed, and a good host at the "Weisse Adler." His promise was fulfilled to the letter; and is so, I trust, for the comfort of all travellers, even unto this day.

CHAP. III.

THE ROSS-TRAPPE.

Blankenburg to Thale. — Blech-hütte. — One-eyed Guide. — The Ascent. — Garland Weavers. — Harper on the Hill. — Echo and Pistol-shooting. — The Summit. — The Bode-Kessel. — The Descent. — A Travelling Group. — A solitary Painter. — A Wood Scramble. — Conclusion.

PERHAPS I ought to stop at Blankenburg, having no pretensions to draw out an Itinerary of the Harz, and few adventures during my third and last day's ramble to report, which touch either Music or Manners. But it is difficult to break off in a journal full of those pleasant remembrances that light up the fogs of a wintry spring, and fill a dingy street-prospect with

"A mountain ascending, a vision of trees."—

A little jaded, and very unwilling to move, I was driven out of Blankenburg at half-past seven in the morning. Carl would fain have tempted me up to the platform on which the *schloss* is built to take a look at the prospect, and an

observation of the building, whose greatest attraction, in my eyes, was its possession, beyond all doubt, of The old original White Lady, or Household Demon (cousin-german to the Irish Benshee), whose appearance denotes that a death is sure to take place. But I recollected that the Palace at Berlin has another White Lady equally authentic, and that few spirits of any colour are ever abroad in the morning air. I had seen, moreover, the best of the view on the previous evening; so I sate still, and we drove on.

From Blankenburg, the road, which is wretched, becomes more and more insipid, the *bergs* keeping in the back-ground, till it suddenly turns in among them at Thale, and crosses the Bode, over a wide bed of blanched stones, among which the stream soaks. The "water privilege" is here employed in the service of iron works; and just ere reaching the village belonging to these, which is well nigh as black and grim with charcoal dust as if it stood on the spur of the Yorkshire hills, a one-eyed lad, in face and figure a perfect Flibbertigibbet, fastened upon

us. This was to be my guide to the Ross-trappe. Never had any one more completely the true hackney tone and hackney slouch of the fraternity, and it was lucky for my undisturbed meditations that he sucked away so constantly at his pipe as only to be able to give out his legends and other information in scraps between the whiffs. A rough plank bridge crosses the bright and busy Bode, and in a few minutes more the path begins to lose itself among trees, and to mount so steeply, that one seems to ascend by stories rather than a more gradual acclivity. It was easy to gather that this was the great lion of the Harz, from the number of the temptations thrown in the way of the visitor. Scarcely were we in the wood, than a pretty child ran after us, with a nicely knit garland of oak leaves, which she threw over my shoulders; and by the number of dead ones which strewed the path, it would seem as if the trade was a brisk one. There are many artificial stations for rest as the hill is mounted: at Eckart's Höhe, a bare piece of rock jutting out through the trees, where the view over the

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rancy, and all that is stalest in town life;—with dancing dogs and blind men, the scarlet tin tray with its rattling coppers, and the parades of Cheltenham! — Those worn-out scraps of ball-room and ballet music, and the unmeaning mechanical smile with which my *groschen* were acknowledged, put *a bad taste* into my mind as I mounted a story higher. As we came nearer the summit there was more show-work to be gone through; but this was impressive rather than otherwise. A smart round of pistol-shooting was going on, the echoes of which rolled away in muttered thunder among the rocks, like the sound of the bowlers whom Rip Van Winkle saw in Sleepy Hollow. At last we came out upon the cliff, which we had been now climbing during a hot half hour.

The Ross-trappe is a bare and splendid piece of rock, challenged from the other side of the narrow rift, through which foams the Bode, by many no less wild and lofty crags, — the Devil's Ballroom, &c. &c., — and set round with spires, and needles, and strangely balanced lumps of rude stone, thrown about

into the most extravagant attitudes, and menacing each other from point to point. On the flattened platform at the top of the cliff where I stood, are two or three large indentations. There is a goodly legend belonging to these, of a Princess Cunigonda, pursued by a ravisher or fiend — perhaps both, and the miraculous leap of a horse, which either saved her or destroyed her rescuer. That I retail this after dear Mrs. Nickleby's fashion is not the fault of Flibbertigibbet — for he shouted it out at the top of his lungs, as loudly as if I had bespoken the tale to try the echo withal, in place of the pistol and the cannon-shooting which is performed for those delighting in sudden noises. But I was looking up the valley of the Bode too busily to heed him; — following the long horizontal lines which seam its grim slanting crags so thickly feathered with fir-trees, and watching far down in the dark chasm the whirling water, which gleamed among the bushes like a shaken diamond chain, boiling more and more impetuously, in proportion as it is near the Bode *kessel*, or spring, where it wells up into daylight. After lingering a long time on the summit, and pick-

ing out the town of Quedlinburg, and the eight towers of Halberstadt in the distance, we hurried down a rude path, to the great discomfiture, I fear, of a timid young lady and her party who were ascending. She had taken off her bonnet, so as to display a fine crop of bright orange-coloured hair, and had divested herself of her shawl, and her gingerbread-coloured knit mittens (the product of her own industry doubtless), that neck and bosom and arms might be dyed to match. Why, by the way, the young ladies of North Germany should affect this unlovely colour, is a point of taste as difficult to account for as the frequent love of a red umbrella among their old men, which must make it a miracle to keep turkey-cocks in a good temper in any German town. Another no less national figure was perched like a bittern at the water's edge far beneath us. His wide straw hat, blue shirt, and carnation-coloured silk neck handkerchief, setting off his jet-black beard, scarcely made a brighter spot of colour among the sober-hued stones where he had fixed his seat, than the flagrant land-

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It was impossible not to w

the stream. And accordingly, in spite of Flibbertigibbet's remonstrances, I started off on such a scramble through briars, stones, and hazel-bushes, as I have not undertaken since tracking the course of the brooks which, falling into the Lune above Lancaster, run through some of the loveliest rock-scenery in England. All would not do. Vexatious as it is to mortal self-conceit to be circumscribed by those who *lay out* the haunts of Nature to the utmost advantage, after half an hour vainly spent in attempting to obtain a nearer glimpse of the caldron, the roar of which took at last a positively malicious tone, the feat was abandoned as an impossibility: I turned back towards Blechhütte, there to take vehicle for Quedlinburg.

The drive to that clean-looking town, and the drive thence to Halberstadt, offered little to be remembered, save the renewed strength and spirits with which one who has "been long in populous cities pent" looks back to such a ramble as the one here journalized. But enough — I remember Byron's caution to Moore, when they stood together overlooking

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GLIMPSES

OF

BERLIN.

"Nichts liegt der Musik ferner als die Ironie."—*Tyndn.*

GLIMPSES OF BERLIN.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS. — "DER FREISCHUTZ."

A Peep at a Kirmesse and the Cathedral of Magdeburg. — Arrival at Berlin changed since the Days of Burney. — First Impressions of Berlin. — The Splendour of its Buildings. — Musical Anticipations. — Illustrations of Display at Dinner. — The Afternoon of the Germans. — "Der Freischutz" at the Schauspiel Haus. — The Manner of its Performance. — The Cast of the Opera. — Mademoiselle von Fassmann. — Disappointment. — The Metropolis of Criticism. — Morning Visits in Berlin. — Rumours and Qualifications. — Partizanship. — The Fassmann and the Löwe. — Voltaire and Burney on the Berlin Spirit. — Mrs. Grundy and Mrs. Candour. — Absence of Form and Sincerity. — Scene among Artists at a German Supper-table.

SAVE the damsel, who stood under the vine-hung porch of the post-house at Egeln, to show

the splendid flaxen ringlets which were gathered up at the back of her head by a massive silver bodkin,—there was little to be seen for the first six hours after leaving Halberstadt, by the schnellpost which runs between Cologne and the metropolis of Prussia. At Magdeburg, a mid-day halt of three hours gave us time to assist at the opening of a *Kirmesse:* this would have been gay and pretty, but for a hurricane of wind, which raised clouds of sharp stony dust, to the laceration of the skins and the blinding of the eyes of holiday-keepers. The cathedral, too, was to be seen; one of the finest buildings of its class in North Germany. The front is very complete, and its two graceful lantern-towers with the noble window between them have a certain originality in the combination of their Gothic details I had not elsewhere encountered. The building has been recently repaired, so that the alabaster pulpit, by Sebastian Extel, and the tombs of Kaiser Otto, and Editha of England his wife, — a pair of stately sitting figures, — and Peter Visscher's exquisite Apostles in bronze round the monu-

ment of Archbishop Ernest, are not dishonoured by being lost amidst the dust and mildew which make so many an ancient building desolate rather than venerable. Perhaps the piers of the magnificent nave are even too brilliantly white and too trimly neat, and the arabesque paintings of the western chapel, where the Archbishop's sepulchre stands, too glaring in their renovated tawdriness, not to shock an eye unused to polychromy. Or it may be that there is little comfort in a *snatch* of a fine building thus laid hold of in the midst of a journey. The spirit of such a stately church tempts the foot to linger, and demands a mind not urged onward by anticipation. The *cicerone* of Magdeburg cathedral was at once the most exacting and mechanical of the tribe I have encountered in Germany, — possibly he had been disturbed in the midst of a jollification. At all events he smelt most fiercely of brandy, though it was scarcely one o'clock in the day.

The above laconic note, with a word or two in admiration of the panorama of strong

works, and zig-zag fortifications, girdling one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, which may be seen from the tower of the cathedral, are all that my journal records of Magdeburg. Thence to Berlin is a blank, only broken by a course and greasy supper at Genthin, and by a guess or two at the wide and naked splendours of Potsdam, through which the schnellpost passed an hour after midnight. One could hardly make a less interesting journey of fourteen hours; and it was with feelings of no common relief that I felt our vehicle slowly rumbling to its full stop somewhere about seven o'clock A. M. in the yard of the post-office, Berlin. From thence to the Hotel de —— the transfer is short and easy.

Modes of conveyance and usages have changed with a vengeance since Dr. Burney made the capital of Brandenburg a principal station in his musical pilgrimage. The night before he reached Berlin, he remained, as his own agreeable Journal tells us, for seven cold, dark, wet hours, stuck fast in a bog, on a bleak and barren heath, between the last post-house and

the city; and on arriving, after having been detained for three quarters of an hour at the barrier, was conducted, under custody of a centinel, to the custom-house, to abide another detention of two hours. It would have been only natural, if all his life long he had hated a place of which his first impressions were so repulsive. Thanks to the activity of M. von Nagler, roads are now smooth, and conveyances punctual and commodious. The liberality of the times has reduced the inquisitorial proceedings of the custom-house to a cursory and civil examination on the frontier: there is, then, no excuse for bad humour — call it even by the convenient name of low spirits — on the part of the traveller entering the Prussian metropolis. Yet my first feelings in Berlin were those of depression.

The finest of modern cities is like a beauty in a ball dress, and should never be first seen (let the Wordsworths write what sonnets they will) by the light of very early day. However striking be the repose of that hour, the want of welcome to a stranger, in the total cessation of life and

bustle, is chilling to the heart. Bodily weariness, and the reaction after much pleasant excitement, had of course their part, in the first nonchalant glance which I cast at the spacious old Palace, the Arsenal, Schinkel's far-famed Museum, and his square flaring *Bau Academie.* The last, built of a dull red brick, and traversed by pin stripes of lilac tiles, introduced on most original principles of concord, reminded me of a huge bale of one of those coarse and tawdry calicoes which are manufactured for the Mandingoe or Eboe market.

All pre-occupation apart, however, there is a certain coldness in the physiognomy of Berlin which never wholly passes away — morning, noon, or night; a frigid and academical splendour in the new edifices, which makes the eye long for a bit of dingy antiquity. Mine, at last, found a positive delight in resting on the group of corrupt and heavy oriels and bell-towers of the Palace, overhanging the water on the side of the Long Bridge. The mathematically straight, wide streets, lined with noble houses, are beautiful; — but it is the beauty of a set of regular

features without variety of expression, where Fancy has nothing to discover. The Linden, of course, is an exception: and still . . . . but, not to cavil, there are few things more splendid than that long avenue, closed by the magnificent Brandenburgh gate, with the masses of forest in the Thiergarten beyond, especially when seen by such brilliant and mellow moonlight as shone in September, 1839.

As I would fain not incur the charge of heresy and presumption, it is well that I have no intention to talk of styles, and columns, and capitals in my journal. The Prussian capital, in right of its modern Greek buildings, is the Mecca of many a German architect, — Munich being his Medina. Thus, too, it had been to me, musically, long a Holy City. While half dozing on my hard sofa, half watching the ceaseless gleaming of the fountain in the Lustgarten, I had dim dreams of Mara and Milder; — I remembered that Sontag had burst upon the world of her adorers from Berlin. I had been told in England wonderful things of Mademoiselle von Fassmann, who was now

the star of classical Opera. I had heard at every table from which I had eaten since I came into the country of the grace and consummate brilliancy of Mademoiselle Löwe. I anticipated the utmost orchestral and choral perfection, and hoped for "Iphigenia," or "Armida," or "Fidelio," or "La Vestale,"—to say nothing of such good new German operas as were worthy of metropolitan honours. Of course I called for a play-bill with my breakfast; and, in spite of fatigue and indisposition, it was with a leaping-up of delight and expectation which effectually charmed away fatigue, that I saw the announcement of "Der Freischutz," to be given that very evening at the Schauspiel Haus,—with the identical von Fassmann for the Agatha of the opera.

The morning was spent in a pleasant hurry of spirits; — in familiarising the eyes with the principal sights of the city, and in learning how heartily its inhabitants accredit letters of introduction. That day's dinner, too, was amusing: it furnished materials for a scene in an unwritten comedy of "Display." At mine host's

right hand sat Herr ——, the singer, calling for champagne at every mouthful, and boasting of his *bonnes fortunes* with a no less amazing prodigality. There was such an incurable twang of the stage Leporello, however, in every word of his gasconade, and in every name he announced, as to make his adventures at every listener's service amusing rather than offensive. Perhaps, my entertainment in the bustle he kept up was not lessened from observing how seriously he traversed the intentions of one of my dear countrymen, who was equally resolved to shine, but in another fashion. With him, it was all "my dinner with the Crown Prince," — "the day we spent with the King," — "my breakfast at Count Raczynski's,"— and "what I said to him about my own place in ——shire!" Never was greatness thrust upon a man more willingly shared with the public of the highways and hedges. Never was victim — like Mr. Lofty deprived of a single moment's breathing-time by the importunate claims of the great and the influential — more willing to tarry and (to quote the

American who misquoted Mr. R——'s lyric to the poet himself),

—— "*show his tale*
To every passing villager."

Not far off sate a less showy pair of contrasts: one was a middle-aged English gentlewoman, the civilest, most untravelled, most precise of single ladies who had ever come to Berlin to place a nephew at school. Sore bested was she with foreign usages, curtseying with a nervous dolefulness of expression when she entered the saloon — mistrusting every dish that was set before her, and, with almost tears in her eyes, recalling the wholesome roast and boiled of her own kitchen, as mess after mess of disguised vegetables passed round (the Telltower *ruben* — a notable Berlin delicacy—among the rest), or as sweets and savouries were shed on her neighbours' plates in strange admixture. There was a life's training under Chapone and Fordyce in her reserved acceptance of the courtesies of her cavalier and neighbour. He was a blithe, shrewd-faced, loquacious inhabitant of the town, who in very fair English expatiated

upon every use and custom, great and small, of German life and manners, till her poor head, I am sure, must have turned "quite round and back again!" Sancho, in Barataria, had not a worse time of it, under the restrictions of his physician, than the victim of my neighbour's civility among the meats and drinks of the Hotel de ——, which he pressed upon her, in spite of herself; and when, in the midst of an elaborate dissertation upon this and the other Professor's method (how far from the *Reading-made-easy* studies of her own scholastic experience!) he fairly took the good-natured freedom of jointing the leg of a pheasant on her plate with his own knife, the bewildered gratitude of her wintry smile, and her "O, dear sir!" "Thank you, sir!" was almost too much for any by-standing nerves to bear. The repast ended in the gentleman's insisting upon esquiring her to see Seydelmann *

* I have no pretensions to discuss the dramatic art as separate from Music. But I may not have another opportunity of alluding to Herr Seydelmann; and to sketch Art in Berlin at all, without mentioning this admirable actor, would be an absurd omission; the more so, since his name is not mentioned, as far as I recollect, by any of the

in Schiller's "Don Carlos!" She was to be shown every thing. No German ever leaves a sight unvisited: and this was one of the cases in which total ignorance of the language made but little difference. But, after this perplexing civility, the good lady seemed eager to escape,

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travellers and critics who have done so much to draw English attention to the theatre of modern Germany; — not even by that elegant and thoughtful writer, Mrs. Jameson. When I saw him first it was in a translation from the French, as Moliére the lover: and the perfection of his style as regards *finesse*, demeanour, and the power of saying every thing while saying nothing in the common conversational tone of society, made me so completly forget the difference of their languages that I wrote — "I would give any thing to see him with Mars." His Philip of Spain was described to me as no less Spanish than his Moliére was French; his Mephistopheles is, again, as thoroughly Pandemoniacal. In short he seemed to me the only German actor, among those I encountered, whom the schooling of attitude, gesture, and diction, to which the theatrical aspirants of the country laudably subject themselves, had led wholly to the desired result—the easy and vivid simulation of Nature, the life-like completeness of the figure, without a stray chisel-mark. I cannot remember a single point made — a single attitude indulged in: but I know that he *was* the being he set himself to personate, and not "Seydelmann in the part of ——."

I thought, as though by no means sure that further inflictions would not be attempted. I found that she had a tapestry frame in her own room; and, like a good work-woman, had bound herself to complete her task of so many square inches there every day!

The early dinner hour in Germany leaves a peculiarly profitless chasm of time before the early theatre. There are sociable coffee visits, to be sure, principally confined to the ladies, which may be paid; or, following a male Berlin fashion, one may drop into Kranzler's or Stehely's, to toss over the papers and to eat something; but, for a traveller's purposes, the afternoon thus spoiled is next to worthless. Energy itself cannot rummage libraries and look at pictures, when the heaviest meal of the day remains still undigested. So I sauntered up and down the Linden, which was as vacant of foot passengers as our own Bond Street of equipages in the month of September; peeped into Asher's to see what English books were most in request — finding, by way of reply, a heap of annuals new fledged in scarlet and gold — and read the

permitted dole of intelligence in the journal of the day — till it was time to be found in my *sperr-sitz* at the Schauspiel-haus. I had been forewarned at dinner that I was not to look for a very grand representation; many of the singers and half the orchestra were then at Potsdam with the camp, in attendance upon the grand autumnal review; and the opera was therefore given on a small scale in the smaller theatre. Still, to hear "Der Freischutz" in Germany was something. The sensation made by that work throughout Europe had excited one of my first musical yearnings; and the zeal with which I had trudged after barrel-organs in the streets, to catch up the Hunters' Chorus, and had risen at sunrise to pick out the waltz on the pianoforte, came back like feelings of yesterday. It chanced, too, that, save the overture and the great *scena* for the *soprano*,—which, after all, is hardly a concert song,—I had never heard any part of the opera decently performed. Therefore, having taken a hasty look round, and satisfied myself that the theatre (another of Schinkel's works) had a grand classical com-

fortless appearance, in spite of its limited scale; and that the two huge heads of Tragedy and Comedy, set like cameos half the height of the proscenium pillars, cut the perpendicular unpleasantly, I composed myself to enjoy the most delicious of all musical prologues to a faëry tale — more than I had ever enjoyed it before.

The overture began: I was at last hearing it played in Berlin style. Numbers may give tone, but they do not surely influence the intelligence of the conductor, communicated to his band. Nay, there are musical epicures who believe that the finest and most spiritual effects are incommunicable to large orchestras. The body of sound, too, was quite full enough for the size of the theatre. But *was* this Berlin style? Could it be that the quartett of horns in the introduction — music recalling the rich wood-scenery of some of Tieck's *märchen*—was allowed to plod through its work, with only the coarsest lights and shades *rubbed in*, as one says of a painter's sketch? Were my ears, or they, out of tune? I thought of Herr von Raumer's dic-

tatorial demolition of our London music, and the sneers lavished by him in his English and Italian journals on all performances save Berlin performances — on all singers save Berlin singers, — drew my breath, and listened again. It was past doubt — the horns *were* lazy and false. Greater disappointment I have not often felt; nor was the rest of the composition wrought up in a manner to re-assure me: the close, in particular, wanted firmness and animation. One does not go to Germany to hear people *play together;* and to say that the overture went correctly is tantamount to praising the Lancashire chorus singers for going through the "Hallelujah" of the "Messiah" without utterly breaking down. So largely, however, did I distrust my own impressions, that, had I not afterwards enjoyed the realisation of my *beau idéal* of German instrumental performance to the fullest completeness, and had many opportunities of confirming my judgment of the Berlin orchestra, I should have torn this page from my journal.

Yes, not only was the tone of the band

fatigued, rather than crisp or mellow; its execution was characterless and slovenly. Up went the handsome green curtain, with its classical devices, and the business of the stage began. The hero of the opera was Herr Eichberger,—the Caspar, Herr Blum,—the Kilian, Herr Mantius; the last highest in rank among the singers; yet, according to the sensible statutes of German management, taking a secondary part, and doing his best with it, without apparent condescension or reluctance.* Himself excepted, there was not a *solo* singer on the stage who did not sing with an impaired or inferior organ. Finish of style there was none, nor those traces of vocalisation which give the most wretched Italian artist a certain air, and a certain hold on the attention; and

* A friend of mine encountered *die grosse* Schröder (so the Germans delight to call their Siddons) behind the scenes of the theatre, one evening when "Romeo and Juliet" was to be given. She was dressed for her part. "How?" exclaimed he, in true English surprise, "*You* going to play '*Lady Capulet?*'" "I think it an honour," was her simple answer,—the answer of a true artist.

yet where has style a fairer opportunity for display — where a well-trained voice — than in the two *cantabiles* which relieve the great tenor *scena?* Blum's Caspar was rough and hearty — a touch too broad in its buffoonery; and this was all the more strongly obvious from the generally careless and somnolent tone of the performance. The enthusiasm of hope did not, however, quite forsake me till the second act had brought forward the favourite of the Berlin classicists, whose attitudes, —— had told me, the sculptor Rauch sends his pupils into the theatre to study. Let every one henceforward distrust a singer who is described by her attitudes — nay, and even an actress; for a succession of skilful arrangements of figure and drapery surely as little makes a personification as a collection of descriptivè passages in verse constitutes a drama. But I had been too often provoked by the indifference of our vocalists to every thing save the show-off of the crude natural voice, to make the due distinction. On the stage Mademoiselle von Fassmann is a magnificent *blonde*, and when she arranges her hair

in rich Vandyke ringlets on either side of her face, seldom has a *blonde* presented a more effective appearance. Her voice must have been a powerful *soprano*, the natural toughness of which has never been wrought out of it by practice. In all passages of the least volubility she was totally inaudible, or so languidly heavy as to destroy every idea of time; but the purity and truth of her organ were already gone; the middle notes were false, the high notes, when forced, thick and harsh. It seemed as if in all passages of excitement or animation her physical powers became utterly extinct; and while her postures were separately graceful and picturesque, I could not but feel the total want of that electric warmth which would have made even an awkwardness welcome for the sake of a sudden burst of feeling. Musically speaking, her performance was bad; dramatically, elaborate and wearisome. The Annchen, Dlle. Galafres, was beneath dispraise. The audience was scanty and (no wonder!) sluggish. What a contrast between this and even my first night at the French Opera!

I was as much puzzled as disappointed. Se-

dulousness and care in performance had been, till then, believed in by me as an integral part of the musical creed of Germany. It could not be because "Der Freischutz" was a familiar work, and belonging to a class, the interest of which must exhaust itself in a limited period, that the orchestra played so disregardfully, and that the singers were so far behind the Brunswick corps in spirit and unity of purpose. Nor was it fair to my own star to believe I had stumbled on the worst night of the season. All that I afterwards heard and observed in Berlin — all that I have since learned concerning its in-comings and out-goings — furnished me with an explanation of my disappointment, which, right or wrong, comes too strongly before me not to be stated.

Berlin is notoriously the city of criticism — one must not say of pretension; for a Zelter has presided over its music — a Rahel (Madame Varnhagen von Ense) adorned its social circles — and such professors as a Waagen have been charged with the care and classification of its works of art. But when a critical spirit, from

analysing facts and principles, condescends to the care of persons and events, Temper and Pique are apt to have something to say as well as Judgment. So kindly do the inhabitants welcome strangers — so delightful (in spite of its touch of precision) is the tone of their society — intellectual without ostentation — that I cannot but wish they were kinder to each other. To pay a round of visits in Berlin is like dancing the egg dance, where at every step you are in danger of breaking a shell, and leaving a stain. If I asked, with a natural interest, about Madame von Arnim, whose published correspondence with Goethe gives her a claim to be numbered among the distinguished women of her country, a dozen voices made haste to assure me that her letters were no "Letters of a Child," and attacked her reputation with that weapon most odious to woman — a calendar of dates! Who ever thanked the Quarterly reviewer for disinterring the Lynn register that destroyed our belief in the early authorship of the delightful "Evelina?" If I praised the hospitable attentions of ——, I was chilled by

a direct "You go there? It is a hollow house." If I inquired in one quarter for Mendelssohn's music, a dry "Yes, he had talent as a boy," discouraged a second question. If I desired to know, in a second, which of Marschner's works were most in favour, "They perform none here," was the certain answer, and as certain a prelude to some story of cabal and quarrel, which it fatigued the heart to hear. If I wished to be told, in a third, what M. Leon de St. Lubin, who is or was a resident in Berlin, had done besides a pianoforte trio in G minor, and a quintett for stringed instruments, which made me desire to increase my knowledge of his music, I got, in return, the fact that he had played terribly out of tune when appearing at Leipsic as candidate for the leadership, now enjoyed and adorned by my friend David, — nothing more.* And if, in a fourth and last quarter, I expressed a natural curiosity con-

* Since my return, I have stumbled upon the titles of two operas, "Die Goldene Fisch" and "Kornblümchen," by this composer. It is vexatious that, even in Germany, one should know so many modern operas, belonging to names of promise, only by their titles.

cerning Spontini's later operas, which have never made their way past the Brandenburgh gate, — his "Nourmahal" and "Agnes von Hohenstauffen," for instance, — it was like pulling the string of a shower-bath charged with bitter waters, and drawing down a discharge of those nursery tales of which every great musician has in turn been made the hero. I was favoured with the name of the *real* composer of "La Vestale," — I was told how he had been disposed of. In every play-going house was an earnest partisan for Mademoiselle Löwe, or for Mademoiselle von Fassmann. Of this I had a curious proof one evening, when a German translation of Herold's "Pré aux Clercs" was performed, in which the rival queens appeared. The score (how could composer be so thoughtless?) makes their *entrati* succeed each other without pause. First came the Fassmann, attired as the Queen of France, in a splendid hunting costume of green velvet. She laboured through her song, in a manner which showed, beyond mistake, that French music was not within her circle of possibilities. Scarcely had

she finished, and received her round of applause from the classical party, — applause almost insulting, after the positive demerit of her performance, — when forth sailed the Löwe (I beg pardon for introducing her thus unceremoniously) in all the magnificence of her fine figure, brilliant arch black eyes, and captivating smile, — most wonderfully dressed. Ere she could open her mouth, — which, by the way, is usually in the first instance to utter some musical falsity, — an uproar of welcome broke from the French or fashionable party, which seemed to make her eyes sparkle brighter, and her form dilate to a nobler height. The Fassmann pressed her hand to her heart, gasped, turned red through her stage rouge, and did all but burst into tears. We heard the preliminary sob; this she swallowed down; but for the rest of the evening she was inaudible. — "Was ever any thing like the rage she is in?" cried one of the Löwe's adorers, whose *sperr-sitz* was next to mine. "Delicious!"

This theatrical feud was not the only public evidence I witnessed during my transient

glimpse of Berlin, which appeared to indicate that the world both of art and society there is traversed by a network of coterie influences, partizanships, objections, and reserves, so wide-spreading, as well as deep-rooted, as painfully to strike even a bird of passage. Nor is the character a new one. "Musical controversies in Berlin," says Burney, "have been carried on with more heat and animosity than elsewhere; indeed there are more critics and theorists in this city than practitioners, which has not, perhaps, either refined the taste or fed the fancy of the performers." Earlier even than the date of Burney's visit, "Berlin," writes Voltaire to Madame Denis, in the same letter which vaunts the beauties of the Opera House, and the noble execution of "Iphigenie en Aulide,"—"Berlin est un petit Paris. Il y a de la médisance, de la tracasserie, des jalousies d'auteurs, et jusqu'à des brochures." Times have changed proportions, I fancy; for I must add, that a reasonably intimate acquaintance for three years with the musical circles of the French metropolis has not disclosed to me the same amount of artistic disunion and

vexation of spirit, as three weeks of casual and superficial observation of Berlin.

A worse atmosphere for Art than this could not be imagined by its most malicious enemy. What avails putting Mrs. Grundy to the door, and opening it to Mrs. Candour? What avail freedom of motion, superior ease and unsuspiciousness in social intercourse, if a scandalising spirit be allowed to creep in, and if those who think the most deeply upon Art feel the most meanly concerning its petty precedences and honours, — for are not all precedences and honours petty when compared with the indwelling consciousness of being gifted for high things, — which is the only safe motive and sure solace of the artist? It will not do to dismiss the case with coarse and shallow sneers on the differences

" 'Twixt tweedle dum and tweedle dee ;"—

a squabble between a pair of common crowders, who care no more for their calling than its ministering to them a certain amount of gin and water, may be thus disposed of; but not a

disease which paralyses the energies of an eager and intelligent population like that of Berlin. I was talking on the subject with one of the most accomplished and acute observers I have known,—a German too,—and remarking how ill such a spirit of intrigue and evil-speaking in Art suited with the social geniality and absence of form in the manners of his countrymen. In England, I said, where Music was so long disproportionately considered a mere means of money-getting, one might, indeed, have looked for such narrowness of view; and yet I had never observed any thing at home in degree analogous to this. "No," was the simple answer, "it is not so with you in England; your very forms of society prevent it. Here, the universal necessity of their being laid aside, for any one who wishes to be thought a good neighbour, sometimes brings on hypocrisy; professions of regard and heartiness which are not felt;—and then, the comfort of raising the mask afterwards!"

I have had not a few visible demonstrations of the truth of this remark: one in particular

occurs to me — the scene was a supper-table at the principal hotel of no matter what Prussian town. The arrival of two of the most distinguished musicians in Europe was sure to be noised abroad in a few seconds; and, ere the soup was gone, a professional of the place made his appearance. Lean, bilious, conceited; — in an agony to look affectionate and to talk cleverly, dressed with a sort of pedagogic neatness — now he kissed one of the party — now he lavished splendid words and compliments on the other — hung on the words of both, and, with bowed head and clasped hands, received their news as oracles. Damon was not more enchanted to see Pythias. — This man had *only* stigmatised one of the two in print as presumptuous in his art; and on a public musical occasion been overruled by the other for a like fault!

But the comedy was not done. Enter next my old friend, the identical Leporello of the Hotel de ——, in a fuller bloom of success among the fair than ever. Enter, too, ——, about whose merits as an instrumentalist so much has been said and written. The two had been giving

concerts together. More sweet words from Herr Professor ——; more extravagant compliments to the last new-comers; more bland smiles at their great-boy play with each other, which had the desired effect of drawing the attention of the rest of the company upon them. Surely, if Charity lived any where on earth, it was in that good man's breast! The concert-giving pair rose to go. They were not upon the threshold when their panegyrist laid his lean hand eagerly upon ——'s shoulder, with a quick hungry look, which would set up *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, and leave something to spare for *Snake*, as he exclaimed, in a loud whisper, — "Well, well, my dear friend, *you* cannot like his playing, I am sure! Do tell me!"

If the artistic intercourse of Germany be crossed by frequent veins of insincerity like this, it accounts for many of the short-comings and deficiencies which, in the theatrical arrangements of musical Germany, for a while so entirely puzzled me, as occurring among a people at once so friendly in manner and so devoted to Art. I could give other anecdotes,

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CHAP. II.

THE COURT AND THE OPERA.

The Opera House at Berlin. — Voltaire's Correspondence with Paris. — Frederic the Great a Patron of Art; — a Despot over Art. — Burney's Glimpses of the Berlin Opera.—Madame Mara.—Zelter's Anecdotes of her.—Genius and Despotism. — Frederic the Great's Taste in Music. — Royal Patronage. — German Opera hardly formed in the days of Frederic. — The National Theatre. — German Singers. — Madame Milder; a short Sketch of her. — Her Popularity in Berlin. — Her Traditions maintained there to this day.—Madame Schröder Devrient. — Hoffmann's "Undine."—Spontini and Zelter; — the latter criticises the former.— The Appearance of "Der Freischutz." — Melody and Elephants. — The Result of Weber's Successes nullified. — Gradual Deterioration of the Berlin Opera.

THOUGH a more oddly assorted quartett of authorities could hardly be picked out than Voltaire, Dr. Burney, Zelter, and the musical editor* of "The Atlas," — each of them gives his drachma or his mite of information to those

* The author of the "Ramble among the Musicians of Germany."

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pleasant man of modern ar
mingles in his speculations
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the chamberlains of Frederic II., with the grandeur of which, in the first days of Voltaire's sojourn at the Prussian court, he delighted to pique his far-away enemies at Paris. Not a few also of his letters to his "*anges*," the Count and Countess D'Argental, and to Madame Denis, contain allusions to its splendours, among the other glories of Berlin. The tournament of 1750 was pronounced by him to be worthy of the brilliant age of Louis Quatorze * — the opera "Phaeton," to be more magnificently got up than any thing in those theatres of Paris which had so strong a hold on the

* "You would find it difficult," writes Voltaire to M. le Comte d'Argental, "on the delivery of Madame la Dauphine, to give a spectacle as noble and as gallant as that in preparation here ; —a tournament composed of four numerous *quadrilles* (battalions ?) of Carthaginians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, headed by four princes, who will rival each other in their magnificence, to take place under an illumination of twenty thousand lamps, that will change night into day ; the prizes to be delivered by a lovely princess, before a crowd of strangers assembled to witness the spectacle. What is this but the age of Louis Quatorze revived again on the banks of the Spree ?"

philosopher's affections to his dying day, — the scene of the Palace of the Sun being beyond all admiration. Madame Astrua, the *prima donna*, had the best voice in Europe; and the music was very good. How should it be otherwise, when these pomps and splendours emanated directly from a King, "in every respect like Marcus Aurelius, save that Marcus Aurelius did not make verses, and that his prototype does, and excellent ones, when he gives himself the trouble of correcting them:"—a King (to quote from another *couleur de rose* letter of the same period) "who fights like Cæsar, thinks like Julian, *and gives me an income of twenty thousand livres, and honours also, for supping with him!*" Alas! could the last be the reason why Philosophy should extol valour and liberality in his royal pupil and flatterer? It seems so; and shortly afterwards the "*mais*," indicative of a sense of hollowness and dissatisfaction, which would even then creep into Voltaire's letters to Madame Denis, became an exception too potent to admit of his remaining any longer in so brilliant a court,

and under so peerless a sovereign. The King had begun to talk of "throwing away the orange as soon as he had squeezed it dry,"—the Mentor was become weary of "washing dirty linen"—so Voltaire contemptuously styled the literary assistance rendered by him to the Marcus Aurelius, who made verses, and was too royal to correct them. Nine years afterwards he was not ashamed to record his change of note yet more decidedly. The "Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. Voltaire" give us the thread ends and the coarse canvas of the tapestry with a vengeance! What availed the splendid Opera House,—its boxes supported by Caryatides,—if the sovereign who built it lorded it there after the fashion of a Tiberius? The panegyrist turned satirist informs us, that the King's favourite *danseuse*, La Barbarini, had been carried off from Venice by his soldiers, though anything but a Helen;—so depraved was the monarch's taste. And we are not told that the *quondam* Julian lavished upon this unworthy fancy a thousand *livres* of salary more than he had accorded to the "orange he had squeezed,"

and the "washer-*man* of his dirty linen" in the chaste retreats of Sans Souci,—till the bitterness of the reproach had been already secured by an earlier paragraph. For there we read, that the greatest of Kings showed little grace to his ancient favourites;—and only rewarded with a pension of seventy crowns the poor Madame Sbommers, his first love, who had played the harpsichord to his flute in his young days, and for her complaisance had been flogged by rough old Fritz, his father! Too much of the weakness of humanity is displayed in these humiliating exhibitions of spleen, to make us wish to linger with them, though they have a value and a bearing as regards the history of Opera in the Prussian metropolis.

Notices, however, yet more directly significant, are to be found concerning it in Dr. Burney's Journals. He visited Berlin, some twenty years after the reign of Voltaire, when the monarch, beginning to be a "little scant of breath," was harassed by the long passages of brilliant execution which Quantz had written to close the *solos* in his flute *concertos*. The

historian's musical eyes discerned that Art flourished in an ungenial fashion. It was bid to hold up its head and step out, in the straight lines of parade and form, just as the King pleased! — Music, in short, was under a military despotism. The King was at the whole expense of the opera; the public being then admitted *gratis;* and at six o'clock in the evening the monarch took his place in the pit, close to the orchestra, behind the *maestro di capella*, overlooking the score, and rebuking any of the singers who should chance to make a flourish, or change a note in the music. The poor humble vocalists! What could come of such cast-iron severity, but a monotonous baldness of execution? The orchestra consisted of fifty performers (two harpsichord players among the number): the singers were, Signora Agricola, wife of the composer, and fifty years of age; Signora Gasparini, a yet more ancient wonder, inasmuch as she was seventy-two years old; Signori Concialini and Porporino, and Mademoiselle Schmaling, afterwards *the* Mara.

What a pity it is that we have been de-

frauded of the memoirs of the life which that eminent songstress told Zelter, in 1829, that she was designing to write, though late in the day, for she was then eighty-one years of age! The personal incidents of her long artistic career must surely have been interesting in the hands of one who remained to the last, as her friend and panegyrist assures us, "characteristic, self-dependent, and peculiar." The memoir by Rochlitz, in his interesting work, "Für Freunde der Tonkunst," gives us a desire to know more; while the following passage from Zelter's correspondence to Goethe is too curiously connected with Royalty and Art in Berlin, not to be welcome, independently of its anecdotical value.

"She came hither," says Zelter, "in 1771, from Leipsic, as Mademoiselle Schmaling, and made her *début* in Hasse's 'Piramo e Thisbe,' at the same time with Concialini, — to the King's astonishment, who, at first, would hardly deign to hear her, as her paternal name sounded far too German for his ear. From that time to 1773, she sang here in the carnival operas 'Britannico,' 'Ifigenia,' 'Merope.' Then she

fell in love with Mara, a violoncellist, and favourite of Prince Henry the King's brother. As the two powers of course refused to sanction a marriage betwixt Berlin and Rheinsberg, Prince Henry's residence, the lovers absented themselves without leave. They were caught, and Mara was despatched to a regiment at Kustrin, where he was compelled to become a fifer. Mara returned to Berlin, and was allowed to marry her. From December, 1773, she sang as Madame Mara in the following carnival operas: 'Arminio,' 'Demofoonte,' 'Europa galante,' 'Partenope,' 'Attilio Regolo,' 'Orfeo,' 'Angelica e Medoro,' 'Cleofide,' 'Artemisia,' 'Rodelinda.' In 1779, in consequence of the Bavarian succession war, there was no carnival; and in the following year, 1780, the married couple secretly absented themselves for the second time.* Again they were arrested;

* The cause of this flight is by other historians ascribed to the following "passage:"—On leave of absence being denied to her when she wished to recruit her strength by a visit to the Bohemian *baden*, the songstress took the resolution of neglecting her professional duties, in the

but the King ordered they should be set free, to go where they liked; as he was anxious to get rid of Mara, even at so high a price. This we know from actual documents; but she, our

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hope of being allowed to depart as worthless. The Czarovitch, Paul the First of Russia, happened about that time to pay a visit to Berlin; and she was announced to appear in one of the grand parts. She pretended illness. The King sent her word, in the morning of the day, that she was to get well and sing her best. She became, of course, worse — could not leave her bed. Two hours before the opera began, a carriage, escorted by eight soldiers, was at her door, and the captain of the company forced his way into her chamber, declaring that their orders were to bring her to the theatre, dead or alive. "You cannot; you see I am in bed." "That is of little consequence," said the obdurate machine; "we will take you, bed and all." There was nothing for it but to get up and go to the theatre, dress, and resolve to sing without the slightest taste or skill. And this Mara did. She kept her resolution for the whole of the first act, till a thought suddenly seized her that she might be punishing herself in giving the Grand-Duke of Russia a bad opinion of her powers. A *bravura* came; and she burst forth with all her brilliancy, in particular distinguishing herself by a miraculous shake, which she sustained and swelled and diminished with such wonderful art as to call down more applause than ever. Her disgust, however, at the transaction led, it is said, to a resolution to escape.

friend, will not confess any knowledge of it, and complains of violence having been exercised towards her." That her Berlin trammels had graven deep traces in her mind may be gathered from a trait noted in Zelter's letters of 1803: "Mara," says he, "is said to have signified, while in Dresden, her wish to exhibit for the entertainment of the Elector; but when she was informed that His Highness in general is pleased to eat while music is going on, she let it be understood that it would be impossible for her to sing while others are dining. This declaration has cost her a hundred ducats, and the Elector an *aria*." When she was in England she had so far followed the natural order by which those tyrannised over become in turn despotic, that, at Oxford, she walked, with all the grandeur of Rodelinda's self, out of the orchestra, rather than stand up while "the Hallelujah Chorus" was performed.

The rest of this curious and genuine fragment of biography has its value as further illustrating the state of art and patronage in Berlin.

"Mara," continues Zelter, "had become an object of the most universal enthusiasm ever since the performance of the opera 'Britannico,'* in which, as Agrippina, she sang behind the scenes the aria 'Mi paventi il figlio indegno!' with a voice of tremendous power, and yet with a maternal pathos that forced bitter tears from my eyes every time I heard her. The piece is a regular *bravura* air, and such as was the fashion in those days: it was as if a thousand nightingales were straining their throats to warble for revenge.—In all tragic parts she seemed to rise a head taller than usual. I never beheld any thing grander than her Queen Rodelinda. Connoisseurs censured her for want of action in passionate parts. 'What!' she used to exclaim, 'am I to sing with my hands and legs? I am a singer; and what I cannot do with my voice, I will not do at all.'

"The relation of such a being to her husband

* By Graun, who wrote, be it noted, Italian operas for the gratification of the royal ear. This very *bravura* it is which has recently been revived by Mademoiselle Löwe with such success in Berlin.

was a general subject of compassion. Mara in Rheinsberg abused the Prince's favour in the most gross and public manner. As it was a rarity to hear him play, the Prince had on one occasion, at carnival time, being then at Berlin with his whole suite, and eclipsing with his entertainments the royal *redoutes*, invited the court to hear the incomparable Mara perform. All came but the King, and one other, who was also missing, — namely, Mara himself. At last they dragged him in. He was drunk, and refused before the whole court, in spite of the entreaties of his patron, to play; so that the Prince could not but feel himself publicly compromised. The King regarded the insult as a species of high treason against his consort, who was present; and this was considered to be the cause of his severity on the occasion of Mara's first desertion. . . . . There were many other causes. The fine residence of Rheinsberg, near the frontier of Mecklenburg, was a nest of smugglers, whom no one dared to oppose that loved his life, while they were under the protection of the favourite. But the King knew

very well where the contraband clue was fastened, which extended, by the aid of the court equipages, from Rheinsberg to Berlin. Mara closed his existence here in the most abandoned debauchery, although his wife never wholly forsook him. I once expressed to her my surprise at the generosity of her conduct towards him, when she replied, 'But you must at least allow that he was the handsomest man ever seen!'—Reichardt, too, had continual quarrels with him, because he would meddle with the Royal Opera. The King, for one whole carnival, sent Mara to sleep in the guard-house on the hard boards; where the common soldiers were allowed to play the roughest tricks with him. This nettled Reichardt; and therefore, as a young patronising *kapellmeister*, he wrote a long story to the King on the treatment of old musicians. On this the King remarked, 'I thought I should have thrown the trouble of the opera off my shoulders; and now I have the old plague again, with the addition of one fool more into the bargain.'"

How far "the old plague" complained of was the consequence of mistake and egotism, it

were not altogether a loss of time to examine. In Burney's time, at least, the Philosopher-king was abundantly narrow in the choice of his music. The only operas permitted to be given were by Graun, Agricola, and Hasse; and even by the last composer very few. Occasionally His Majesty chose to write a score himself, which, to judge from the manuscript of "Il Re Pastore," and certain marches recently discovered at Berlin, appears to have consisted in his vouchsafing to scratch down a few melodies upon the ruled paper: noting down his notions of the manner in which they should be completed for Quantz, his musical washer-*man*, to fill up. The latter, however, seems to have kept the peace, and yet gone his own way; for we find that he was independent enough to dare in one composition to give *an upward motion* to certain orchestral parts, in spite of the monarch's pencilled injunction — "Let them descend." "Upon the whole," concludes the judicious Burney, "my expectations from Berlin were not quite answered, as I did not find that the style of composition, or manner of execution,

to which his Prussian Majesty has attached himself, fulfilled my ideas of perfection." What good, indeed, to the free mind of Art could result from such narrow patronage? What good from the three flute concertos played nightly by the royal *virtuoso* at his private concerts, until the loss of his front teeth destroyed the possibility of further trespass upon the patience of the obsequious court; and the King, as Burney tells us in his 'History of Music,' ceased, therefore, to "take further pleasure in the art!" The manner, indeed, resulting from such paralysing support, or, to call things by their right names, interference, could hardly fail to be what Burney declares it was — mechanical and devoid of sensibility. The King's musical presidency, it is needless to point out, tended to a systematic and resolute discouragement in composition of all those national characteristics out of which a style is made. His liberty of conscience meant prejudice against all things grave and ecclesiastical; when he heard of any composer having written an anthem or oratorio, the Philosopher fancied his taste was contaminated by it, and

would say of his other productions, — "*O! this smells of the church!*" He would be French in his opinions — Italian in his ears, and, between the two, German Art, the spirit of which is Belief, and the musical expression uttered in harmony more than in melody, stood but a poor chance. The natural stuff of his countrymen is too robust and solid in texture to take the colour with which he resolved to dye it; and hence, in place of displaying that vitality and creative power which we have a right to expect in a great metropolis, the Opera of Berlin was, under the auspices of Frederic II., a formal state machine, as innocent of the warmth of real life or the poetry of enjoyment as are the bespoken dithyrambics of a laureate, or the restricted festivities of a diplomatic circle.

For such royal patrons I have often thought that the fittest musical amusement would be the monster snuff-box playing the few chosen tunes, or the puppet-show of the Great Mogul on his throne with a band to be wound up at pleasure, which the Dinglingers or Maelzels of mechanical invention can construct. It is of little matter

whether the romantic or the classical or the frivolous predominates in the composition of him who prefers possessing in Art a puppet which can be manœuvred at pleasure, in place of a free and grateful creature, constrained only by love and cherishing to exercise spontaneously the noble powers of creation. A King should not make of Music either his drill-serjeant, or his fool, or his paramour, lest his people too become towards her tyrannical, or absurdly tolerant, or licentious. The best patronage which those who sit in high places can bestow on the works of Genius is by practising the hardest lesson they have to learn—the sacrifice of their own whims and fancies. All honour to King Louis of Bavaria, then, who, in planning his magnificent palace of Munich, desired his architect to build it not merely for himself, but for his children, and for his children's children. Even Louis of France, who cared for little, Heaven knows! beyond the circumference of his ambrosial *perruque* and his velvet mantle covered with *fleur de lis*, was, musically to speak, a better King for the French nation, when providing in L'Académie Royale for all those na-

tural tastes and impulses of his subjects out of which styles and schools proceed, than the redoubtable Frederic, when endeavouring in his superb Opera House to feed the German people with French superficialities and Italian airs and graces.

Still, while we remark how the brilliant and philosophical King not only threw back his country's music, but, by the abiding popularity gained for his name, made a false taste, as it were, sacred, and to some degree perpetual in his metropolis,—it is just, too, to observe, that German Opera had shown few signs of a will or way of its own before the time when Frederic the Great was called away from his piping and patronising of Art to his hard and unadorned tomb in the Garnison Kirche at Potsdam, whence Napoleon carried off his sword. Gluck's operas, it is true, might have startled him out of his despotic exclusiveness, and he might have hastened to adopt them in the fulness of his Gallomania, seeing that their most brilliant successes were gained in Paris rather than in Vienna; but he loved Italian singers, and these could

not abide Gluck's music. At that period, too, Mozart had only just begun to give the world those marvellous compromises where Italian *cantilena* and German harmony combined, to the enchantment of all civilised musical ears. The fame of the Great King, and the love borne to his memory, may, after all, be more largely chargeable with the exotic tendencies of the Royal Opera in Berlin, than his own despotic management and short-sighted tastes. Be this as it may, the national lyric drama, when it began to take a shape and form of its own, was rather for the people than for the court, being performed at the National Theatre. There, however, the arrival of Iffland in 1796 as manager, and his distinction as actor no less than dramatist, contributed to make the soil as little genial to musical growth as the scene of Weber's first triumphs in "Oberon" became with us under the admirable dramatic management of Mr. Macready. Nevertheless, Himmel's "Fanchon" managed to struggle into life, and to circulate thence from Berlin throughout Germany. It is now forgotten: forgotten,

too, is the "Donauweibchen" of Kauer — in its day a universal favourite; and the merry operas of Dittersdorf. To these slighter works the court can hardly be blamed for preferring the *buffo* music of Italy, executed by Italian singers. Yet in the executive department of Opera, too, Germany was becoming richer. In the catalogue of popular operatic celebrities at Berlin, — to turn over which makes one half-melancholy, the mime and the musician being among the most signal illustrations of Fame's transiency that the world possesses, — we shall find such names as "die schöne Baranius," "die Döbbelin," celebrated for her performance in Naumann's "Cora;" "die Unzelmann," praised by Zelter for her agreeable singing and acting in "Die verwandelten Weiber;" "die Schick," and "die Bethmann;" the last, from a pretty singer, having ripened into a great actress; while at the court theatre, Fischer the elder was a *basso* sufficiently excellent to have parts written expressly for him.

Ere Fischer appeared, Reichardt had passed away, who, in 1775, succeeded Graun as *kapell-*

meister, and is described to have mounted the Italian opera in a very splendid manner, after the death of Frederic the Great. Reichardt was in turn succeeded by Righini, an Italian, and who composed many works; not, however, more Italian in their style than the operas of the Winters and Naumanns, who chose any writer rather than Gluck as their model. This timid want of nationality among the German composers may probably have told favourably upon the German vocalists. By this time, too, the delicious works of Mozart were at hand, forming a point of universal union, simultaneously satisfying the taste of the court and of all who loved such melodies as could flow sweetly from *la bocca Romana*, and the more muscular desires of a people who were increasingly earnest to find thoughts rather than sounds in Music.

The early period of the present century, then, seems to have been a time of progress and enjoyment for Opera in Berlin. The court and the people, while their tastes kept asunder, were gradually influencing each other,—these to the improvement of the singer, those to the in-

creased nationality of the composer. An untoward fate, however, seems to have pursued German Opera. Mozart died at the moment when he was attaining to a true knowledge of its capabilities; Beethoven's melancholy infirmity, and the disappointments which attended the production of his "Fidelio," limited his stage contributions to that one drama. At the moment, however, when the national repertory of new master-works was in danger of being exhausted, and the national taste of composers, hardly sufficiently assured, ran some danger of being lost among the Italian melodies rather than the German harmonies of Mozart, the evil day was averted at Berlin by the appearance and triumphs of Madame Milder in 1812. For many subsequent years her acting and singing illustrate the golden period to which all those devoted to German Opera enthusiastically recur. They triumphed, at all events, for a time, above the flimsy court predilections for foreign aid and talent, by which the taste of Frederic the Great — even now represented in a diluted form — has always hindered the national music

of Germany from thriving kindly on the stage of its northern metropolis.

This celebrated songstress was, according to Fétis, born in the year 1785, at Constantinople, where her father, a courier belonging to the Austrian court, was upon a mission. Her musical and dramatic endowments, — a voice which has been universally described to me as magnificent, the fullest and richest of *sopranos*,—and a person which ripened into a rare stateliness, early attracted the attention of M. Shikaneder, the same Vienna manager for whom the "Zauberflöte" was composed, and who wrote its incomprehensible *libretto*. He placed her under an Italian singing-master, and superintended her appearance on the stage. But she was *a voice* and an actress of Nature's making; for so inflexible was her organ, or so indifferently cultivated, as to be incapable of the slightest trill or embellishment; and though Mrs. Jameson says that "this magnificent creature never would sing any other than German music," the truth is, that she *could* not. She was, in addition to this, so indifferent a musician, as to learn every

part only by having it played again and again to her. But for that, she might have been accepted implicitly as the type of the great German songstress; because the incomparable "Fidelio" was written for her, and also the part of Emeline in Weigl's somewhat lachrymose "Die Schweitzer Familie." It was for her, too, I believe, that the operas of Gluck were revived, which make so brilliant a point of retrospect in the history of Berlin Opera, and still form its best and most satisfactory feature. It may be fantastic to presume that the Greek blood which some say ran in her veins had any part, conjointly with the heaviness of her voice, in prompting her to assume the lyrical cothurnus in those splendid dramas; but certain it is, that they were her greatest triumphs. In later years she took the fancy of singing such parts as Mozart's Donna Elvira and Susanna; but even this music was too slight and figurative for her to succeed in.

How completely Madame Milder satisfied a national desire, in spite of all these technical deficiencies, and the drawback of a manner

in society which has been described to me as indolent and frigid even to the unamiable point*, may be gathered from the rapture which she excited — not merely in the court — not merely in the public — but in grave composers and tough German critics. So much

* I have been told that Milder was restrained and ungracious towards children; in this how different from our own stately Mrs. Siddons, who was more than once found, as one of her biographers tells us, "with her magnificent hair let down, playing with a little child, and telling it faëry tales!" A friend of mine, who remembers Milder's reserve, but remembers too her magnificent impersonation of the heroines of Gluck at Berlin, in the years 1818, 1819, was present at a whimsical scene in one of these performances. At the moment when Blum, the bass singer, who used to strengthen himself for the part of Hercules upon champagne, was carrying off the colossal Alcestis from the shades below, singing the while "Dem Orkus zum Hohn, raub ich ihm seine Beute" "In defiance of Orcus, I rob him of his prey,"— Queen Milder, aware of the risk she ran in arms so unsteady, and overpowered with sudden terror, exclaimed, "Herr J——! Ich falle!" This exclamation, than which the wife of Noah's invocation "to the Father and swete St. John," in the old Mystery, was hardly more curiously inappropriate, elicited a simultaneous roar from all parts of the theatre. And from that day forward Milder was *led*, not carried, from the stage by the God of Strength.

for the triumph of Nature! On her first visit to Berlin in 1812, "The voice, countenance, and manner of this young lady," writes Zelter, "have a power, grace, and freedom, especially in the part of Emeline, such as we have not witnessed here for a long time. Her singing has been blamed as unscientific; but I find much to praise in it — warmth, truth, connexion, certainty; and a kind of Swiss plainness which is displayed in the most innocent manner in the world. At least I have never seen passion represented with such moderation and decided effect." Three years later we find the same writer (by no means a blind and bigoted lover of German singers) lauding her golden voice as "positively belonging to the class of rarities," and herself as "the only singer who gives you entire satisfaction." So popular became this stately enchantress in Berlin, that she settled finally there, till made willing to yield her throne in consequence of misunderstandings with Spontini. Her picture is in every musical house I entered. She must have been a gorgeous-looking woman — the very

Alcestis and Iphigenia of Gluck in her majesty of attitude and the sublime repose of her features; and so entirely did she impress her own statutes upon her subjects, the public, as things not to be departed from, that I have been told that when Madame Schröder Devrient came to Berlin, and presumed to *costume* some of the classical characters with less munificence of veil and drapery and more liberality of arm and bosom than her predecessor, it was as distasteful to the rigid Berlin critics as a yard-long Rubini-warble thrust into the midst of "Total Eclipse" would be to the frequenters of the Ancient Concerts. Nay, by a touch of royal despotism, inherited from him who sent his soldiers to fetch him la Barbarini, her unclassicality cost her an engagement. Only last autumn, when I saw Mademoiselle von Fassmann, to my ignorant eye absolutely overladen with veil and diadem, and chaplet and stole, in "Iphigenie," and remarked to some one on the impolicy of such a disproportionate quantity of drapery, I was answered — and the answer was considered to be final — "Milder dressed it so."

While the Milder was thus possessing the public of the Court-Opera with her classical traditions, the National Theatre was making a step in the advancement of German Opera towards one of its most brilliant periods. This was by the production of Hoffmann's "Undine," in 1816.

The name of this singular man is best known in England by those terrible or fascinating tales, in which Imagination, while walking on the bounds of Madness, still keeps so strong a hold of probability and natural feeling that the reader hardly knows, on laying down the book, which is real — the dream he has been perusing, or the life to which he is returning. Every chamber of imagery, to which creative power has resort, lay open to Hoffmann. He was a draughtsman, as well as a novelist and musician; had tried many professions, and proved many vicissitudes; and hence the marvellous versatility of illustration by the spell of which his tales, if they fail of catching the reader in one paragraph, cannot but lay hold of him in the next; — since, in their wildest vagaries,

some homely domestic picture, or some feeling we have all of us felt, steals in so imperceptibly yet so familiarly as to make its *entourage* forgotten. From such a man one might have expected nothing less than night-mare music; but these reasonings by analogy are as often confuted as confirmed by fact. Harlequin, because he bounds lightly on the stage is not always a good runner on a race-course: — wits in talk have proved very dull men in comic authorship. There was a touch of the faëry and goblin spirit of his tales in his choice of La Motte Fouque's novel; but little in his music, if we are to believe Herr Truhn, from whose contribution to "Der Freihafen" for 1839 I derive the notice of Hoffmann as a musician.* "Whoever opens a score of Hoff-

* During the period of Hoffmann's musical career, which included a directorship at Bamberg and another at Dresden, — a career only entered on somewhere about his thirtieth year, when the war of 1806 had driven him from his *Rath*-ship in Prussian Poland, — he tried every form of composition. He has left behind him operas, ballets, a Miserere, a Mass, a Symphony, a piano-forte trio, sonatas for the same instrument, and several vocal compositions. Taken in conjunction with his stories, the number of his utterances seems, by this catalogue,

mann's," says he, "with the expectation of meeting in sound all that world of *diablerie* and phantasm which the celebrated author of the 'Phantasie Stücke' had entirely made his own, will be considerably disappointed. His music has no where that unearthly wildness which pervades the romantic operas of Weber, Marschner, Lindpaintner, and the gloomy ballads of Löwe and others: on the contrary, it is composed after such classical models as Mozart and Cherubini; and, like their works, dwells in the genuine musical region of sweetness of sound and beauty of form. Even in the music he composed for Werner's tragedy, 'Das Kreuz an der Ostsee,' where he might have embodied all the terrors of the aboriginal forests and their heathen inhabitants, the Scythian rhythms of Gluck, in the 'Iphigenia in Tauris,' served him as a model." Yet, somewhat to mitigate

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to have been extraordinary. Perhaps he possessed the most feverish spirit of all those universally gifted men, of all countries, who fill such a strange and interesting chamber in the gallery of artists; to some of whom, time and encouragement permitting, I may return on a future day.

the impression of insipidity or want of enterprise which such a character is calculated to convey, we are told by the same authority that the music for the parts of Undine and her uncle Kühleborn the water-sprite is mysterious and characteristic; that the heroine's songs are for the most part accompanied by the violoncello, whence such a manner of colouring as Weber afterwards perfected appears to be indicated — to say nothing of several wind-instrument effects no less novel and romantic. A happier story for a romantic opera than "Undine" could hardly be met with; and the success of Hoffmann's music was great — the work having been performed twenty-three times before the National Theatre of Berlin was burnt down. Since that time it has not been played any where, — partly owing to the expensive decorations required — those in Berlin cost twelve thousand *thalers*, — partly owing to a rumour, that the score had perished in the flames, which was spread abroad. This the composer, who had betaken himself to his fantastic world of Fiction, cared little to contradict. He may have felt its want of that decided

musical merit which, at least in Germany, is required of a work destined to live and circulate on its strangely narrowed and encumbered stage. The score, however, is about to be published; and perhaps the Prussian powers that be will one day esteem its revival worth at least as much trouble and expense, for the sake of Fatherland, as they bestowed upon the production of Auber's weakest work, "Le Lac des Fées," on the occasion of the national festival, the "Huldigung," in 1840.

Neither the strong influences which Queen Milder exercised and still exercises on the stage of the Berlin Opera, nor the production at the second theatre of a work so attractive as "Undine" is said to have been, could break the court habits of taste and preference. The limited extent of the genuine German repertory, and the all-pervading intoxications of Rossini, which, for the time, were strong enough to seduce Beethoven's own townsmen from their allegiance, might have something to do with this. How shall we wonder, when, at home, English music and English musicians

are well nigh prejudged among English grandees as contemptuously as Mademoiselle Schmaling was by Frederic the Great in his less enlightened days? There were no other new works in the artistic mart so likely to fit a Grand German Theatre Royal, not vowed to its own country, and yet not wholly Italian, as "La Vestale" and "Fernand Cortez;" and accordingly Signor Spontini was invested with the *baton* of operatic sovereignty at Berlin, which he still continues to wield; — with what success and benefit to the city which received him, the present stormy and unworthy controversies now pending unhappily declare too emphatically. It would seem as if every bar of his music was like that *Raug* or magical tune which the Hindoos believe is a certain bringer on of storms, clouds, and earthquakes!

Before Spontini's appointment took place, however, Berlin art, as well as Berlin literature, had, among the people, in a great measure thrown off the French stays into which Frederic the Great had forced it. The people of the town had found a natural develop-

ment of their own strongly-marked musical tastes in the Sing-Académie founded by Fasch and perfected by Zelter.* There had been

* Zelter's catholicity and fairness as a critic is not more signally displayed in any passages of his letters than in those relating to Spontini's operas. As illustrative of the history of the Theatre of the Caryatides in Berlin, I must give one or two; the chapter being already professional beyond redemption for the unmusical reader: —

"*Berlin, June* 1820. Spontini has just got his last opera translated into German. He requires for this work forty violinists in the band (not more than half the number being there already), and an enlargement of the space for the orchestra in the Opera House. If the rest of the instruments be increased in proportion, the people in the *parterre* may look for places outside the doors. For my part, I shall not fail to derive some good from observing the experiment, although I plainly see how and where it must end, if the grain which is wrapped in all these folds is ever to be found. . . . .

"*July*, 1820. I have heard Spontini's 'Cortes' twice. The poem is by De Jouy, and much better than the very bad German version which is substituted here. I am disposed to prefer the music to that of 'La Vestale,' but must hear it once or twice again, as I have gained a kind of general view of the whole, but as yet no fixed point of observation. Single portions are, in reality, admirable; and the dances throughout are good, and full of genius. But what has hitherto confounded me, is to see that an Italian of great natural powers, habituated to great

also growing up a sound instrumental amateurship, which can never flourish without patience,

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effects, should adapt to great heroical subjects such petty melodic forms, which seem the more unaccountable from being, as regards the instrumental accompaniment, most heavily overlaid. . . .

"*June*, 1825. I have twice sat through our new twenty-stone-weight opera, 'Alcidor,' by Spontini, which takes four hours in the performance. The music is a work of almost miraculous labour; one must be a thorough musician even to appreciate its amount with the proper measure of astonishment. It is a chaos of the rarest effects, which seem to be striving each to destroy the other, like the singing princes that appear in it, and imply immeasurable diligence in the composer. There is the toil of ten years in the work; and I might fret myself to bits, and still be unable to produce any thing like it. The current criticisms are not just to the author; they either condemn the work, or extol it with cold approbation. He has succeeded only too well in what he intended to do: he wished to excite wonder,— to amaze; and with me he has fully accomplished his object. To me he appears like the Gold King in the story, who breaks people's heads with lumps of gold. As musical execution now depends for its success on *excess*, the greatest demands upon it are not unreasonable; and the complaints of the people in the orchestra of its difficulty, are a mere nothing to what the ear has to endure in dwelling so long in a labyrinth of sounds, which are at once too attractive and too oppressive to escape from. I have no such power of en-

knowledge, and experience,— all, in short, that predisposes its maintainers to a deeper music than Italian vocalism or French conventionalism. It was unlucky for Spontini that the "Olimpia," the first of his new compositions produced after his appointment, should fall so far behind his earlier operas, where there is more of solidity and less of sound. The obstinate frequenters of the Sing-Académie, — the amateurs who had taken part in one or other Liedertafel society long enough to find how the national heart beat,—who had not in vain listened to the

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durance, and thought that yesterday I should come off more easily; but to-day I still ache all over; eyes and ears, yea, my very skin and bones, are sore with much seeing, and hearing, and sitting. All this is not to be laid to the door of the composer in particular; it belongs to the *time*, which hurries every one to destruction who cannot help being carried away by it. In short, the work is, in all externals, a very remarkable one, on account of the exaggeration of style carried to the utmost pitch, exhibiting power and beauty in *travestie*, and in its real hollowness, producing a confusing — nay, an annihilating effect. The parts intended to be melodious seem to me like an outline drawing, in which the contours are perpetually breaking off instead of flowing, and thus wander into caricature."

exquisite quartett-playing which so many private Berlin circles afford almost as liberally as knitting-needles and tapestry-frames to the ladies, and cakes to the world of both sexes,—resented this foreign domination. Though they ran to see the gorgeous spectacle, the elephants the size of life and the other stage splendours called forth for the inauguration of the new *kapellmeister*,—they criticised him searchingly in the true Berlin fashion; and only waited the moment and the man to declare themselves openly.

The moment and the man arrived in the year 1822, on the occasion of the opening of the New Schauspiel-haus, and the bursting into day of Weber's "Der Freischutz," then and there represented for the first time. "It came upon us," writes one to whose warrant this sketch is largely indebted for its historical tone, "like sunshine and unexpected good news. There had been no puffing and very little talk about it. From the first notes of the overture to the last of the *finale*, it was a brilliant triumph; and not merely for the author, but for all true Germans. When

Weber was called for at the conclusion of the opera, and showers of garlands were rained upon him from all parts of the house, there came down also numberless copies of a poem in which he was praised as the man who *gave us music instead of elephants.* The opera was admirably performed. Madame Seidler was the loveliest Agatha one could see. It was popular — I mean in the very streets — as soon as brought out; even difficult portions, like the first air of Caspar, being heard every where. When I paid a visit to Weber at Dresden, six months later; — in his half-modest, half-ironical way, he raised his hand to the top of the looking-glass in his drawing-room, which was overhung with laurel garlands, and said quietly —'Die hat mir alle Der Freischutz eingebracht.' (All this has Der Freischutz brought me.) The work had then been performed every where throughout Germany."

And this very opera was the one I heard massacred with such carelessness in the very Schauspiel-haus where it had first appeared! Had the performance taken place under one

of our own theatrical managements, I should not have ventured to assume its mediocrity as typical or significant of the general style; but we have learned, since the days of our musical nonage, to look to Germany as the headquarters of zeal and completeness; and the Berlin Opera is directly under the patronage of the state. There ought, in such an establishment, to be no bad days — no blanks — no chasms. Inquiry, not confined to Berlin sources, gave me some intelligible reasons for the soreness felt by the musical public of the Prussian metropolis, on seeing their theatre possessed by a stranger; — and patronised most largely by a court, when it was given over to the comic opera of the French, or the *roulades* of the Italians; — a court which, in its disregard of national genius, could plead the example of the great Frederic himself. Since the days of Milder's departure, and the triumphs of "Der Freischutz," it was universally agreed that the general style of theatrical singing in Berlin had become less and less excellent; that voice after voice had been destroyed, and artist

after artist alienated; while the composers of the country, ill-paid, coldly received, and indifferently treated, gradually shrunk off to their own nooks and corners, there to nurse the hope long deferred, and the irritation so hard to repress, which would be reproduced in the form of humours and crotchets on the part of the active, and of a sullen indolence on those more phlegmatically organised. Fourteen years ago, when the agreeable author of the "Ramble among the Musicians in Germany" was at Berlin, the parts taken by Milder in Gluck's operas were given to Mademoiselle Schechner. She, however, was only a passing stranger; and, though an excellent voice and a fine actress, was still one of those whose appearance, however welcome, leaves no traces on the progress of her art. The Sontag, too, was then in full bloom at the Königstadtisches Theater, but her immeasurable brilliancy led her shortly afterwards to devote herself to the Italian stage. Those times, also, are gone. As regards classical opera in Berlin, the age of lead has come on. The Fassmann, as I saw her, was a weary

distance below the Schechner as she had been described to me. Every visit to the Berlin Opera left me more chilled and more disheartened than the last. And yet, if I was unlucky in the great music of the country, I ought (according to north German taste) to have rated myself as the most fortunate Cœlebs who ever travelled forth in search of music, from the frequent opportunites I had of making acquaintance with Sontag's successor, — as the Löwe's friends were pleased to style her. But of her, and the exotic operas I heard, in another chapter.

CHAP. III.

SPECIMENS OF GERMAN NATIONALITY. — THE LÖWE.

The French Operas I heard. — The Pound of Tea across the Border. — Mademoiselle Löwe. — Her Cadences, — her Demeanour, — her Popularity, — her Magnificence of Costume. — Mademoiselle Grünbaum. — The Konigstadtisches Theater. — "Der Bauer als Millionair." — German Humour. — German Opera Books addicted to the Supernatural and the Monstrous. — Specimen of their Subjects. — The Piper of Hameln. — Gläser's Music. — The Hybrid School. — Lortzing's Operas. — Weber's slighter Music contrasted with this. — Truth to Nature an Element of his Style. — Wants of Opera in Germany.

"You must wait for our grand operas till the review is over, when the court comes back from Potsdam, and the orchestra is in full *force*," was the unanimous answer of every one to my complaint against the weak and languid performance of "Der Freischutz:" — "they do some of Gluck's very magnificently; and Spontini's 'La Vestale' and 'Fernand Cortez.'" "And which of Marschner's?" — "None." "And

Weber's 'Euryanthe?'"—"Very rarely:" and out came the hundredth tale of cabal and court predilection. I might as well, from all I heard, in indulgence of my intense curiosity as to antique German Opera, have bespoken "La Costanza e Fortezza,"—the composition by Fux, performed in the open air at Prague one hundred and twenty years ago, on the coronation of Charles VII. as King of Bohemia; which Quantz described to Dr. Burney as being in the old church style, coarse and dry, but at the same time "grand," and as having "a better effect perhaps with so immense a band*, and in such an immense space, than could have been produced by more delicate compositions."

But the visitor to Berlin, however rational

* "This opera was performed by a hundred voices and a hundred instruments. There was not an indifferent singer among the principal performers, all of whom were of the first class. Among the six male singers, Carestini is perhaps the name best known. The female singers were the two sisters Amberville. The choruses were in the French style, and served for dances; and it was upon the singing in this opera that Benda formed his style."— See *Burney's Present State of Music in Germany*, vol. ii. p. 177, 178.

in his operatic expectations, would stand but a poor chance of his wishes being fulfilled. As regards the slighter national works of the day,—such operas, I mean, as Gläser, and Lortzing, and Conradin Kreutzer pour out with a fecundity which speaks well for their perseverance at least,—I suspect I might have waited for the return of King Sebastian, before I should have been treated to any thing of the kind at the Grand Opera. That its managers, however, do not disdain works flimsy in structure, and unambitious in scale, I had proof in the operas which I did hear in Berlin. These were —

"Le Postillon de Longjumeau"	*Adam.*
"Le Maçon" - - -	*Auber.*
"Le Pré aux Clercs" - -	*Herold.*
"Le Domino Noir," - -	*Auber.*

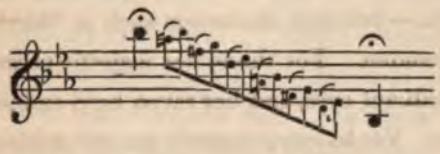
What has been said of the "Guido and Ginevra" at Brunswick, applies, I think, even in fuller force to these pretty trifles, as regards their effect when translated from French to German.

Every one has been told the fate of the first pound of tea that ever crossed the Border: how

the good Scottish lady to whom the delicacy was intrusted had it cooked and served up like a vegetable, to the extreme disappointment of her guests, who found the far-famed delicacy "nothing so wonderful after all." Little better treated than this unlucky Hyson or Bohea is the Comic Opera of France, as far as I am acquainted with the result of German attempts to naturalise it. Though more generally relished in Germany than it has been with us in England,—where, indeed, it has been thoroughly disguised under an intolerable grossness of condiment, when not utterly changed past recognition by a destruction of its distinctive taste and texture, — the real *aroma* is not the less lost. And yet, as performed in Berlin, when I heard them, the French comic operas had every advantage which Germany could give them — royal patronage, and a company well fitted for their representation, difference of clime and language considered. In three of the works here enumerated, the *prima donna* was the far-famed Mademoiselle Löwe.

I ought, perhaps, in discretion to say nothing

of this lady, because it is more than probable that she may have been heard, before my journals are read, in England; and she *may* have created herself anew, as a singer and as an actress, since the month of September, 1839. At that time,—though she was the most ambitious of all florid singers I have ever heard, constantly venturing cadences in such a style as this—



or, in other words, losing no opportunity to exhibit the long compass of her voice, in imitation of the example set by Malibran,—Mademoiselle Löwe was neither exact in tune nor in time. The extreme notes of the scale she hazarded were oftener false than true; the *roulades* she launched were executed with that hurry, betokening anxiety as to their completion, which, as all the world knows, makes florid singing scarcely tolerable. "I 'll shake you!" exclaimed the provoked old singing-

without giving warning, to
enormous trill, more enterp
Neither, in 1839, was Made
comic actress she professed
however, that, as often as I re
any of her *smorfie*, I was told
in the passionate and stately
Opera,—her best characters
Desdemona. For these, her
her brilliant eyes, and her rave
fit her. Yet so extravagantly w
by her friends whenever sh
drawing-room airs and grace
Herold and Adam, that I susp
tion was an excuse employed
ling stranger, rather than a
for home use. Had I said,
Berlin Opera, that I th

let them gracefully dangle from the wrist,—had I insinuated that in the supper-scene in "Le Domino Noir," where the heroine is obliged to appear in a peasant's disguise to baffle the curiosity of a house-full of rakish young *diplomates*, there was a conscious humour and cleverness in her glance and in her assumed *ton de soubrette*, too natural to the woman to be natural to the situation, which is one of the utmost discomposure and alarm: — Had I uttered any one of these heresies, I say, I should probably have been worse treated than I once was at a Paris *soirée* for presuming to assert that Madame Dudevant (George Sand) had ever wandered about the world in "doublet and hose." Therefore, for the sake of peace, as often as my neighbours broke forth into raptures about one of the Löwe's enormous flourishes, I admired the crown of blush-roses from beneath which it issued; — when they found "favour and prettiness" in every one of her motions and gestures, I fell back upon her symmetrical *corsage*, and the sleeve, which was a real *seduisante*. I have never — no, not even in Paris, the Paradise of

[illegible] Mme. [illegible] in [illegible]
[illegible] but a [illegible]
[illegible] that such is the
[illegible] as a star by Mme. [illegible]
[illegible] from England. Of the
[illegible] Mme. Blanche was [illegible]
her voice being a sweet [illegible]
more [illegible] than the sight
[illegible]. Mme. Blanc, the principal
of these head-ranking artists [illegible]
piano and produce very small [illegible]
too, was entirely worn out. In the
the singers, French opera in [illegible]
other town where I have [illegible]
and disappointing entertainment.
orchestras have [illegible]

to French blood, and to French blood alone. The superficial glitter of the Opera Comique (the glitter of a diamond, which, however thin, is genuine) can never be *got up* by German industry and research. Why the trick should be attempted I know not; why the Germans, with all their humour and fantasy, their capital low comedians, their careful actors, and their honest love of the stage, should not be able or willing to support comic music of their own, must strike every one as strange, till he has weighed and considered matters a little.

This I was led to do, after visiting the Königstadtisches Theatre in Berlin; the third theatre of the city,—and the head quarters of illegitimate drama—to which German comic opera now seems banished. To the musician, this theatre, shabby and dusty as it looks, is well worth a visit on other grounds: for memory's sake, as the scene of Sontag's earliest triumphs; for present enjoyment too, as possessing an excellent resident *prima donna* in Mademoiselle Hahnel,—a lady most unmeritedly shut out of the greater Opera House, I was told, by the ex-

tolerably performed, though d
many sizes too large for the th
evening I enjoyed there a "
tisches original Zauber-Märchen
"Der Bauer als Millionair," a so
made up of domestic interest an
thy; —the *comedie larmoyante* of
the broad farce of the Leopoldsta
Vienna. This would be as difficult
bring home to the sympathies of a
going audience as it once was for m
a foreign friend of mine to the su
bishop's apron, or as it always is to
arm-wavings and genuflexions of a
unused to pantomimic narrative.
from reading the "Fiabe" of Carlo
the same indefensible mixture of th
absurd is effected with

their long line of other marvellous kindred, can hardly fail to become old and familiar friends, on a first introduction, to all who have a particle of faith or fancy. Hence, besides being amused, I was interested by finding that the German world had not grown too wise to relish *extravaganzas* little less monstrous. The story of Raimund's faëry legend has the same cast as the ever-green tale of "Cinderella:" — there is a cruel father and an oppressed daughter, and the latter is under the especial care of good angels, who, to avenge Herr Wurzel's ill-usage of her, turn his house upside down, and his money-bags inside out — deliver her and beggar him. The tale could not be carried on, of course, for popular use, without some sentiment and cookery *; but in these essentials we were

* This is not said unadvisedly, but in weary remembrance of more than one "*Lust-spiel*," where tender talking and coffee-drinking (at least) seemed entirely sufficient to keep the German public alive and amused. The fourth and last act of one comedy I shall never forget, in which, after the adventures at a watering-place of a graceful and coquettish heroine (admirably played by Charlotte von Hagen) were entirely wound up, a domestic scene of

French dialogue, than they are from the command over interest and climax which makes even Kotzebue's domestic plays so moving, — is no less certain. In France, that sense of the ridiculous, and touch of the positive, which ever intervene to save the *convenances* of the stage, give a certain point and probability to legends even as absurd as "Le Cheval de Bronze," or as repulsive as "Don Juan de Marana." Not merely, on the other hand, do the German librettists, when they get hold of a good subject, wander about dreamily and aimlessly among what is impossible and pointless; they appear to consider all the birds of the air and all the fishes of the sea their fair game. The success of Weber's faëry tale was certain to be followed by an outpouring of enthusiasm for the supernatural. Not less than four of Spohr's operas, "Faust," "Zemire und Azor," "Der Berggeist," and "Pietro von Abano," have been founded on legends of the same family. But the vein, if not already exhausted, requires consummate skill in working; and the Germans have been long reduced to gather up the scraps,

as it were, of the banquet of Wonder, without having learned the art of combination. I will not weary the reader with an interminable list of operas produced since "Der Freischutz," in which sorcery and necromancy, the diabolical and the faëry world, take every conceivable form. To instance the want of selectness of which I have complained, I need only describe the subject of one of Gläser's operas, which I narrowly missed at the Königstadtisches Theatre, on my second visit to Berlin. This was "Der Rattenfänger von Hameln;" and as the legend is less known in England than others of its quality, I will even give a version of it, never printed, which was said and sung to me in my young days till I knew every note of it by heart. It was, indeed, strangely like returning to times earlier than those of my intercourse with the spider-legged piano without additional keys, — to Haydn's "Mermaid's Song," my first musical recollection, — and to the old house, with the cherry tree — a treasury of blossoms in spring and black-red fruit in summer, which overspread the irregular nursery windows, — when I encountered, among the particularly ill-printed

advertisements and announcements of a German paper, a long criticism upon the music and the scenic decorations of an opera, founded upon the good old tale of

The Piper of Hameln.*

At Hameln in Westphalia,
  Two hundred years ago,
A tragedy was acted
  That made all eyes o'erflow.

A legion of destructive rats — The Plague of Hameln.
  This town did sore affright:
In vain were all the dogs and cats
  To put the foe to flight.

The citizens of Hameln
  Were wrought into a fume,
To see such fierce invaders
  Their precious grain consume.

And as in lamentation
  They mournfully bewailed,
Their ears with strains of music
  Were suddenly assailed.

And soon to their astonish'd view
  The strange musician came; — The guest.
All piebald was his garment,
  And unknown was his name.

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* The legend may be found recorded in as ancient a book as the "Letters of James Howel, Esq.," written by him when in Germany (1619).

Keen was his eye, and shrill his voice,
When from his lips he drew
His pipe. That pipe, whose loud mysterious notes
Such prodigies could do.

His speech. "Ye citizens of Hameln!"
The piebald piper cried,
"To save you from destruction
My talents shall be tried;

"And every wild voracious beast
Be put to sudden flight,
If unto me most solemnly
His bargain. You will your promise plight —

"That I a golden recompence
Shall this day twelvemonth have,
If I return unto your town
The bright reward to crave."

The men of Hameln promise: Then loud assented every voice,
And promised every tongue;
Whilst loudly did the piebald man
Exalt his wondrous song.

and are delivered. And as he march'd with solemn step
Through the ungrateful place,
The rats, both old and young, did join
In one continuous race.

Nor when a lake appear'd in view,
Did they the race refrain,
But 'midst its glassy waters sank,
Nor ever rose again!

Now all was ease and mirth and peace; The piper cometh again —
  The year roll'd swiftly by;
The piper came his boon to claim, —
  His boon they did deny. is disappointed.

Three days he loiter'd in the town,
  Like one full of dismay;
And when these perjur'd citizens
  A mass knelt down to pray,

The wondrous man a vengeance plann'd His revenge.
  For that forgotten plight, —
And piped such wild, melodious tones,
  That every infant wight

Pursued his steps, as on he march'd,
  To catch the lofty strain,
Till not a baby in the town
  Did very soon remain.

Each mother's darling urged the chace,
  As loud the piper play'd;
And soon approach'd a lofty hill,
  — No little heart dismay'd, —

When through a chasm in its side,
  Each tender infant pass'd;
And, as it closed its fatal jaws,
  The piper gave a blast.

Nor ever, from that day to this, It lasteth to this day.
  Hath he or babe return'd;
But every father, conscience-struck,
  The awful vengeance mourn'd!

[illegible] themselves
[illegible] even wiser in their craft
[illegible] property-man of Bunny L[illegible]
any effect with a story like t[illegible]
remembers the thrilling intern[illegible]
flight of the magpie with the spo[illegible]
Ladra.* But, granting the rat [illegible]
an equally practicable thing, Gli[illegible]
a Rossini. I was told that "Der [illegible]
is not the best of his productions
know his music, it seems to me to
hybrid school, and to be at once d[illegible]

To characterise this hybrid sch[illegible]
be easy, and is hardly worth

* This was the worthy who was used
judgment upon every [illegible]

fear it must include graver composers than Gläser. The Lachners, and Lindpaintners, and others of the hour, seem to me, as far as chamber trial and hearsay enable me to form an opinion, to be wandering every where in search of a style. And their want of decision in the matter has in part led to the neglect of the public. For the blame must not be wholly laid upon courts and cabals, that, during four months passed by a traveller in Germany, in towns of every size, each possessing its lyric theatre, — except "Euryanthe" once at Dresden, and Gluck's "Iphigenie" at the "Huldigung" at Berlin, — he could not hear a single German opera! save three by the only writer, ancient or modern, who, to judge from playbills and papers, seems to have a general as distinguished from a local circulation.

This is Lortzing. Resolved not to imitate my Parisian acquaintance ——, who, on a critical tour from city to town, and from town to city, declared he could never fall in with a German opera, when the truth was that he would not take the pains of going to the theatre, — I heard in

[illegible]

[illegible] They were [illegible]
[illegible] compositions, as [illegible]
German heavy, as the [illegible]
might as one of our own [illegible]
able novels, would be [illegible]
spirit. Hale and hearty, [illegible]
home with the most [illegible]
the Black and White [illegible]
music alternately by [illegible]
violins, or the hoarse and [illegible]
of three trombones." Neither [illegible]
mastering that which is dry [illegible]
in certain moods of mind has [illegible]
the discomfiture [illegible]

tillon," in their German dress, reminded me of the Scotch lady's tea in a tureen, these indigenous comic operas bore a strong resemblance to the same beverage as it is rendered in the interior parts of Germany;—where a pinch of ashy dust, in whitey-brown paper, is brought to the gasping traveller, and the water follows in an open pan, smoking and smoked — where tea, in short, is no tea at all.

The oftener I became so weary and low-spirited under the infliction of these colourless productions, that I could long for the wildest piece of witch-work in the German repertory—the more was I disposed to exalt Weber to an immeasurable height for the nationality of his lighter music; — witness Kilian's song, and the whole part of Annchen, in "Der Freischutz"—witness the exquisite overture and dance tunes belonging to "Preciosa." Yes; he possessed, if ever any man did, the secret of German gaiety. He could transfer to his songs and dances, however light and brilliant, that spirit which is also a living principle of Beethoven's playful music, and worthy of the deep study of any one who would

analyse the mysteries of style. Not only have his airs and melodies a costume — in their merriment there is a truth to the outer world, as well as in their sadness to Man's inner heart. Every thing in Nature that is wildest and blithest—the laughing of brooks as they leap from stone to stone, the glancing of early sunshine over the ocean when its waters are curled by the blithest of autumn breezes, the extasy of birds in the full enjoyment of life and summer — has a part and a reflection in his livelier music.

Child of Romance! how varied was thy skill! —
  Now, stealing forth in airy melody,
  Such as the west wind breathes along the sky,
When golden evening lingers on the hill;
Now, with some fierce and startling chord didst chill
  The blood to ice, and bathe with dew the brow;
  Anon, thou didst break forth in brilliant flow
Of wild rejoicing, such as well might fill
  The bright sea-chambers where the mermaids play:
All elemental sounds thou didst control;
  The roar of rocking boughs, — the flush of spray, —
The earthquake's muttered threat,— the thunder's roll,—
Scattering, like toys, their changes through thy lays,
Till wonder could no more, and rapture silenced praise.*

* From "A Garland of Musicians."

It was this vivid felicity of describing emotion by simile, — of expressing the passions in a manner as free from the conventionalisms of France as from the sensualisms of Italy, — that made Weber's operas strike with an electric force to the hearts of his countrymen. It is this peculiar and admirable nationality which has given him the ear of all Europe, and will embalm him for posterity — dare one prophesy how long? Pity, that the throne to which he ought to have been raised in Berlin was bestowed upon a stranger.* Our German friends have anathematised the English climate for cutting short the glorious career of Weber; but

* I do not forget that Spontini had been appointed to his place before "Der Freischutz" appeared. But the whole early life of its composer was a painful struggle with difficulties; and the obstacles to his advancement were so numerous, that for a twelvemonth he laid music wholly aside, and addicted himself to lithography. Let no one reply that Weber started out, in all the fulness of his originality, at once. We have his earlier "Silvana" to prove the contrary. When will kings and patrons remember, that one hand held out to struggling genius is worth "a mob of palms" compelled to honour genius triumphant?

assuredly the lukewarmness at home (till home was taken by storm), which so warped it aside from its natural direction, ought not to be altogether forgotten. To the Artist, self-reliance; but to the patrons of Art, justice!

At the risk of being thought offensively to generalise, I cannot close this chapter without enumerating the three things which every day's experience, in and out of the country, has impressed upon me, as the three wants of modern German Opera: —

Nationality, on the part of its patrons:

Agreement, on the part of its managers:

Probability and truth, on the part of its writers.

I shall be only too glad to be proved in the wrong.

CHAP. IV.

MORNING HOURS.

An Hour at Potsdam and Sans Souci. — The New Palace. — The Music heard in its Gardens. — The Pfauen Insel. — The Schloss. — Wall-painting. — Untidy Gardening. — An Hour in the Berlin Gallery. — The Van Eyck Wing-Pictures. — The Fancy of the old German Masters. — A Word or two touching Lucas Cranach. — The Bath of Youth. — An Hour with Madame von Arnim. — Herself and her "Letters to a Child" identical. — Her Conversation. — Her Rhine Pictures. — The Romance of the Post-horn. — The Spirit of this truly German. — An Hour with Herr Liepmann. — His Invention, — his Patience, — his Assistant.

If, during my operatic evenings at Berlin, I was provokingly disappointed in Germany, I had rich compensation in some of my mornings, which were most delightfully spent, a certain lassitude of body and depression of spirit allowed for; which, rather than lay it to the account of a vexed musical spirit, I will make bold to ascribe to miasma from the Spree, that blackest and most canal-like of streams. There was the morning

idled away at Potsdam, among the terraces which, height above height, rise by a stately and formal gradation of steps and platforms from the great avenue of the New Palace to Sans Souci, — that Prussian Trianon, where Frederic the Great wrote and Voltaire flattered him. It was not permitted me to enter and see the relics of the monarch and his familiar, as the present King of Prussia (then Crown Prince) was, at the time of my visit, sojourning there, to take his part in the autumn reviews. But the best relics, after all, are those that Memory has in store: so, little disappointed, I lingered among the gigantic golden pumpkins and the vines which clothe the front of the terraces (these eatables being more plentiful and curiously tended than the flowers, which would have the first care in an English royal "policy"), thinking of the days that garden had seen, and how like it was to some decoration which à Watteau would have thrown off *, or a Mondonville have bespoken for the

* The French taste, formerly affected, and maintained to a certain degree in Berlin during the late King's

show-scene of one of his grand operas. Then I roamed up the park to the New Palace, the scene of Frederic the Second's concerts; but another King was there, who, like his son, was superintending the military evolutions of the camp; and therefore I could not make my way in to discover whether any traces remain of the musical curiosities enumerated by Burney; — the piano-forte "by Silbermann of Neuberg, beautifully varnished and embellished; and a tortoise-shell desk for His Majesty's use, most richly and elegantly inlaid with silver; and the catalogue of flute-concertos for the New Palace;" and "the most magnificent harpsichord, made by Shudi in England, all silver and tortoise-shell, which cost two hundred guineas," and was spoilt by its transmission up the Havel.

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reign, was strangely crossed by a vein of Gallo-phobia, the manifestations of which were sometimes amusing. I happened to speak of the garden at Sans Souci to a Berlin friend of mine, in much the same words as I have written in my journal. "French, indeed!" was the quick rejoinder; "they are like a much handsomer thing than any thing French! — like an Italian garden, sir!"

In place of any sound of flute or harpsichord, my wanderings round the New Palace were accompanied by the reiterated and pompous cannonading carried on by a party of sham-fighters within a quarter of a mile. Whenever it ceased for a moment, the pertinacious birds of the garden resumed their very noisy concert. The effect was most curious. At a less warlike moment I should have had more chance, I suspect, of coming upon a *ballet* than a concert at the New Palace. The late King, though a staunch upholder of Spontini's thundering marches, in which the utmost amount of Janissary music was accumulated, was rumoured to care but little for Music, but to take a lively interest in the sister art. He was a liberal and courteous patron of those whom he did patronise. It was his wont, I have been told, to surprise the *artistes* who exhibited in his presence with magnificent contributions to their toilettes of cachemeres, ball dresses, and jewellery, laid out in the ante-chamber to await their departure.

Another pleasant morning was devoted to the

royal folly of the Pfauen Insel, a little bosky island on the lake-like Havel, not far from Potsdam, where his late ballet-loving Majesty of Prussia indulged in simpler tastes, and built up, within sight of each other, menageries, palm-houses, temples, conservatories, and show-dairies, and other rural edifices, in such profusion that the privacy of the retreat was entirely destroyed. Un-German as was the taste of Sans Souci, it was better, because more substantial, than the stucco-romanticism of the mock ruin where the King of the Pfauen Insel lived. This is an odd structure, with two shattered towers connected by a bridge of iron-work, as trim and tidy as if it were new from Colebrook Dale; and, on the ground floor, a sham arch-way in the outer wall, enclosing a piece of scene-painting by Herr Gropius, representing a vault and a man in armour, seen through half-open doors. Absurd as all this must appear to an eye used to the rural edifices of English landscape gardening, it was hardly less strange to mine than the manner in which the royal edict to promote floriculture in the Pfauen Insel had

tony complained of a solit
of tasteful finish: the patl
domain were of a deep gra
grass seemed innocent of th
duces such miracles on the
heims and Chatsworths. It
the museums and marvels of
will, under Prussia's new mona
of the Pavilion at Brighton
sovereign.

But I no more went to Ge
quasi-French palaces, or Engl
executed, than to hear French
had seen Versailles, and many
at home, the suburban beautie
the Pfauen Insel pleased me
morning sights within the rang

of European fame. Yet, beautiful as it is — Schinkel's recognized master-piece — I never could stand beneath its symmetrical colonnade, nor cross its ample and majestic rotunda to approach the picture saloons (shame that a national propensity should disfigure such a noble vestibule with the odious furniture of spitting-boxes !) without thinking of the old adage of "a large gate to a little city." The contrivance of closetting off the not-too-spacious gallery which surrounds three sides of the building, by lateral screens between every window, may be favourable to classification; but it is singularly destructive of that spaciousness and grandeur of vista which are not inconsistent with serial arrangement, as the perspective of the Louvre testifies. The larger Italian pictures fare ill in the Berlin gallery. Save in one or two exceptional instances, — as in the case of Lorenzo Costa's "Presentation," which is seen down the whole length of the room, — no ingenuity can place the spectator at the distance demanded for a due appreciation of their effect. But as the Prussian collection contains no master-pieces of

a conclusion of my own u
nor so easily have resigned
of the gallery, had I not bee
the most acute and searchin
on painting, in preference
series of master-pieces of an
Flemish art which it contai
daily tour to the left of the
ended in my leaving Berlin
the richer. I had been prepar
mentally calm, but not passio
of the six precious Van Eyck wi
formerly surrounded the marve
of the Spotless Lamb" (a wor

* I mean the anonymous writer o
on the Berlin and Dresden picture
peared in "The Athenæum," in the
I have found nothing

the Channel to St. Bavon's, Ghent, to see); prepared for the richness of their colouring, in which, as my guide has poetically described it, "the azures, greens, and crimsons, like richest jewels reduced to pure and many-coloured water, which swam and stayed itself on various parts of the surface, seem rather waved thither by the magician painter's wand—his pencil—than spread." Surely the winged angels on two of the panels are none other than Palestrina's or Orlando Lasso's rich and stately chord transferred to canvas! I had been prepared, again, for the deep feeling and the homely pathos of Hans Hemlink; and so patiently did I wait upon his works, too, that it may be hoped that an appreciation some little deeper than an imitative and traditional sympathy resulted. But, in presence of masterpieces like these, honoured over all the world, it were presumption to venture beyond a simple expression of reverent admiration. Other pictures, however, of an inferior class, are less sacred, and may be less known. One or two, by the singularity of their subjects and manner of treatment, laid such a close siege to my fancy,

and will for ever remain so closely intertwined with all my day-dreams, touching one most interesting section of ancient Art, that, perhaps, they may be dwelt upon less reservedly without impertinence. The day-dreamer, however, must run the risk of being thought to utter fancies signifying nothing.

The wonderful affluence of imagination in some of the antique Flemish and German pictures has hardly been sufficiently felt by those who have contemned them as stiff and monstrous. Yet the chisel of the Gothic stone-cutter never rioted more wildly among the chimæras and the foliage which enwreathe the pillar-shafts and border the portals of old cathedrals, than the pencils of the Paul Brills, and Breughels, and Bosches among combinations of perspective and figures, or even yet wilder exhibitions of the florid grotesque which make up their rich and elaborate and fatiguing pictures. Strange that the lawlessness and exuberance at which Music is only now arriving should have been the point whence Painting seems to have started among the people on this side of the Alps! It is possible, however,

that the fantastic tricks of the newest musicians and the eldest painters proceed from sources totally opposite: in the former case, assumed to conceal exhaustion of power and meagreness of invention; in the latter, the unconscious result of the high spirits and extravagant strength of Art in its childhood and inexperience. Be this as it may, Weber never produced any thing wilder in his supernatural or faëry scenes than is to be found in the lower part of "The Last Judgment" by Hieronymus Bosch. A coarse and sensual Hell indeed is this;—such an one as, to all appearance, might have been *littered* on the canvas during the throes of intemperance following some gross and violent carouse; yet still wonderful from its congruous incongruity—from its direct appeal to those feelings which make out pictures in the fire, and trace warriors, &c. &c. in the veins of a block of marble—wonderful, in short, from the same sort of fascination which the half monstrous half familiar objects of a vision exercise over the first waking thoughts and purposes of the seer. Again, there is Paul Brill's "Tower of Babel," an anticipation of Martin's

garb, earnest in gesture, l
with its Gothic city in the
salem being merely some F
amplified. The imaginati
pictures overflow made mi
giddy, and I never approac
newed surprise at the stag
starvation of Fantasy now-a-

In another mood, yet n
their affluence of invention,
two by Lucas Cranach. I
I am right, or even state in
pression with respect to this s
saying, that there seems to m
Gothic as was its manner o
touch of the same lingering p
Dame Venus* long time figu

* A long and curious collection of

the popular legends and faëry tales of Germany, and as is manifest (as antiquarians will witness) in the signs and symbols which may be found among the Christian emblems adorning our most primitive ecclesiastical architecture. In spite of all his incorrectness of design, and unselectness of model, I have fancied that a voluptuousness of tone may have existed in Cranach's mind, not altogether in accordance with the school and period and people to which he belonged. Naked gods and goddesses, the size of life, recur to me, in which the utmost grossness of contour, the most flagrant distortion of limb, cannot utterly neutralise a rich and subduing meretriciousness of intention — an attempt to realise ideal conceptions of sensual beauty. While, last autumn, roaming over that curious and most picturesque building — the Burg of Nuremburg, I came suddenly upon one of these divinities, which had been removed from the picture gallery (so called), and been put aside in a sunny corner. Even then and there — though my head and heart were as full of as many other thoughts

and other associations as they could carry — the malicious gleam from those long eyes, and the sunbeam dancing upon the artfully arranged golden hair, brought back to my mind the heathen troubling Appearance in Tieck's exquisite tale of "The Runenburg," that seduced the innocent gardener from the culture of his flower-beds to a wasting and passionate quest of a cruel evil spirit, — the end of which was madness and death!

The work in the Berlin Gallery which gave birth to this idea, is the "Bath of Youth;" at a first sight as ugly and repulsive a composition as ever tempted dainty gazer to walk on hastily, — still with a curious fecundity of conception, and a hard, heart-striking truth of execution, rivetting all whose inclination permits them to indulge in a second glance. The magical fountain is in the midst of the picture. To the left of it are waggons full of old women — other hags are riding upon pillions — others, again, reversing the legend of the Wives of Weinsburg, are conveyed pick-a-back on men's shoulders. All are in the last stages of hideous

decrepitude, and urging on their charioteers and horsemen with a hollow-eyed, ravenous eagerness; some of them absolutely agape with terror lest Death seize hold of them before they have undergone that wonderful immersion by which their enchantments of youth shall be renewed. The bath itself is half filled with these withered, dismal spectres, as unsightly as Milton's Sin, or Spenser's Error;—in the other half are floating, with an extatic languor,

> . . . young budding virgins, fair and fresh and sweet:

on the one side is all the fierce impatience for the wondrous transformation; on the other, the conscious pleasure and amazement of Beauty, as she quits the fountain to bask on the smooth-shaven grass, or to array herself in the gems and garments which are to double her sorceries. Behind is a rich flower-grown parterre, with inviting arbours, and mysterious bosquets, and tables spread, round which a company of banqueters is arranged, and golden cups are kissed by the brave to the health of the fair. The epicureanism of the precept —

> If the world be worth thy winning,
> Think, O think it worth enjoying —

is hardly more voluptuously breathed in glorious John Dryden's familiar couplet, than, in spite of their grimness and angularity, it is expressed in the forms of the ancient painter: and I never passed onward to make myself familiar with the Rubenses or the Rembrandts which hang in a further compartment of the same section of the gallery, without pausing one moment, from the same feeling as makes one unable to resist turning a page of the most familiar or absurd book of "gramarye," however choice or erudite be the library where it is encountered.

Any true musician who has a touch of the fantastic in his composition — and what true musician has *not?*—will probably take an interest in another of my morning pleasures, greater than he has found in my feeble transcript of Cranach's "Bath of Youth." I allude to the hour in which I had the pleasure of listening to the earnest and brilliant conversation of Madame

von Arnim; — that friend of so many artists, and whose journals and letters to Goethe have presented the world with the most poetical picture it has yet received of the master-genius of German music, — the rapt and rugged Beethoven. Even were I willing to publish what passed in the confidence of private intercourse, to record that interview in detail would be impossible. Such a rapid and vivacious and ever-changing flow of eloquence I never encountered, even in a woman, — never such a fund of racy language and quaint illustration, or such a child-like and artless nationality. It was like reading a suppressed page of her strange and poetical "Letters of a Child;" — few celebrated persons being so identical on paper and in personal intercourse as the reporter of Beethoven's *raptus* for Goethe's benefit, and the Lady of Berlin. Never, too, did I look upon a more expressive and striking countenance than Madame von Arnim's. There is a touch in it of Mignon and Fenella; a certain gipsy animation and brilliancy beyond the power of Time to destroy. The hazel eyes are still as

deep, tender, and searching as when they reminded good Frau von Goethe of the tones of the violoncello.* The small and symmetrical figure is as nimble, and the gestures are as impulsive, as in the days when their owner jumped into the Main, near Aschaffenburg, on the overturn of her brother-in-law's carriage,

* The list of similar descriptions, in which the operations of one sense are employed to symbolise those of another, is rich and long. As collaterally illustrating my favourite theory, that such a thing as a solitary gift only exists by exception, and that the several arts are "linked by many a hidden chain," I have taken some pains in its collection, beginning with the well-known definition of scarlet given by the blind man, — "that it resembled the sound of a trumpet." But, not utterly to disgust those who do not incline to such speculations, I will offer only a few specimens. The German girl, over her interminable tapestry work, talks of a "screaming yellow;" the little child, who has since grown one of the most distinguished amateur musicians in England, was overheard improvising on the pianoforte, and singing to herself the while, "This is the tune of the golden spots." But the finest application of this class of metaphor I have ever met with was made by a beautiful mute, in whom the deprivation of speech and hearing seems but to have sharpened every intelligence, and refined every grace, and quickened every affection. On overlooking some one writing a letter in very pale ink, she said, in her manual language, "*whisper-writing!*"

to rescue the purse of violets Goethe had thrown to her at a party at Wieland's, among the other treasures of the floating band-boxes. The enthusiasm is still untired which stirred the maiden to take an active interest in the fate of the poor Tyrolese, and enabled the mature woman to master the modeller's difficult and delicate art, for the purpose of designing a monument to the memory of her beloved friend — as the striking design at the head of the English version of the "Letters of a Child" testifies. A like ardour of perseverance helped Madame von Arnim through the study of a strange language, for the purpose of effecting her unique translation of her own letters: and had the reader heard her once describe all her hopes and fears, the dissuasions of her more experienced friends and the undismayed pertinacity with which she plunged into the chaos of case and person and idiom, in fulfilment of her purpose, — he would, perhaps, feel with me, that though incorrect and *baroque* and at times hardly intelligible, is the language called English in which the "Letters of a Child" are rendered,

no other version would do as close a justice to the meaning and to the personality of the authoress. No translation would make the book acceptable to the million. Yet those who would search out the connection between Music and the visible and invisible world, without some examination of which no one can enter into the music of Germany, should not disdain the "Letters" in question; even supposing him to care nothing for the vivid and breathing pictures of character, and the adventures, fully as good as faëry tales, they contain. There have been few illustrations of the delicate and almost impalpable chain of associations, which connect particular sounds with particular scenes, more exquisite than some of the less known passages. One or two, as this chapter has taken a fantastic colour, can be hardly resisted. The first is from the "Letters on the Rhine." How they teem with the true spirit of that festal and fancy-haunted river, I felt when, a few weeks after reading them in Berlin, I was wandering among its old grey castles, and its vineyards, each protected by its own crucifix. Surely there is a Rhine-picture

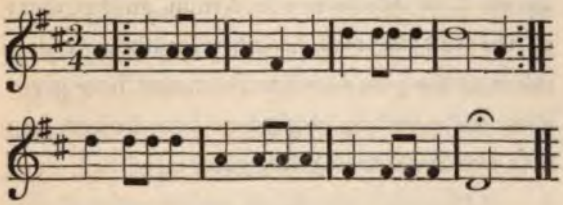
and a Rhine-melody in every line that follows. The date is from Rochusberg above Bingen: —

"Here are still a thousand splendid paths, all leading to the celebrated parts of Rhine; on the other side lies the Johannisberg, up whose steep we daily see processions clambering, who invoke blessing on the vineyards; yonder the departing sun streams in his purple over the rich land, the evening breeze solemnly bears up in the air the flags of the tutelary saints, and swells out the white folded wide surplices of the clergy, who, at dusk, wind like an obscure cloud-picture down the mountain. As they approach nearer, the singing may be heard: the children's voices sound the music distinctly; the bass pushes only at intervals the melodies *into the right joints*, that the little school-crowd may not carry them too high; and then pauses at the foot of the hill, where the vineyards discontinue. As soon as the chaplain has sprinkled the last vine from the holy-water vessel, the whole procession is scattered like chaff; the clerk takes flags, water-vessel, and sprinkler, stole and surplice, all under his arm,

and carries them bodily away; and, as if the boundaries of the vineyards were also those of God's audience, worldly life directly follows: their throats are taken possession of by roguish songs, and a merry *allegro* of fun drives away the song of penitence. All sorts of mischief go forward: the boys wrestle and fly their kites on the banks in the moonlight, the girls spread out their linen which lies upon the bleach, and the lads bombard them with chestnuts; then the herdsman drives the cows through the uproar, the ox foremost to make a way; the pretty daughters of the landlord stand under the vine-foliage clapping with the cover of the wine-can. Then the canons call in and pass judgment upon the vintages and cellars; the matin preacher says to the chaplain after the procession is done, 'Now we have represented to God what the vines need: one more week's dry weather, then early in the autumn rain, and at noon warm sunshine, and so on through July and August:—if then there be no good vintage, it is not our fault.'"

Another story of musical association is too

entirely German in its theme and its romantic colouring not to have a place here. None who have travelled through the country can have failed to catch up the postilion's well-known ditty, blown sometimes through a cracked pipe; for it is not every post-boy who is skilful enough on the horn to be promoted, like our Cologne Jehu, to the post of stage-herald: —



To some the tune will be known by its having been wrought upon by Spohr, as the theme of a minuet in the sonata for piano-forte and violin, op. 96., which he calls "Souvenir d'un Voyage à Dresde," though certainly never was exercise drier than the production in which this travelling ditty is put into the harness of science. Others, again, will couple it in their fancy with Schubert's charming song "Der Post." I know nothing more pleasing, of its own dreamy

kind, than, when travelling late at night, to be wakened from some reverie by the sudden striking up of this melancholy tune (all melodies for the horn have an ineradicable touch of melancholy in them) and seeing the toll-bar which lies across your road rise, with a motion like the waving of a recumbent giant's arm, to the diagonal posture it occupies by daylight. Let us see how Madame von Arnim, in her diary of the last days of Goethe's mother, undertaken at the poet's own request, and here given with but a trifling change or two, in her own racy and broken English, gives us

The Romance of the Post-horn.

"BEFORE I went into the Rheingau," says Bettina, "I went to take leave of her, and, as a post-horn was heard in the street, she said that its sound even now pierced her heart, as at the time when she was seventeen.

"At that time the Emperor Charles XII., surnamed The Unlucky, was at Frankfort. All were filled with enthusiasm for his great beauty. On Good Friday she saw him in a long black

mantle, with many gentlemen and pages dressed in black, visiting the churches on foot. 'Heavens! what eyes had that man! with what a melancholy did he look up from under his sunken eyelids! I did not leave him; I followed him into all the churches; in every one he knelt upon the last bench among the beggars, and laid his head a while between his hands; when he looked again, I felt as if my heart was struck with a thunderclap. When I returned home I found myself no longer in my old way of life: it was as if bed, chair, and table no longer stood in their usual places. It had become night; lights were brought in. I went to the window, and looked out into the dark streets, and when I heard those in the room speaking of the Emperor, I trembled like an aspen-leaf. In my chamber at night I fell upon my knees before my bed, and held my head between my hands like him, and it was as if a great gate were opened in my heart. My sister, who enthusiastically praised him, sought every opportunity of seeing him. I went with her — nobody could have an idea how deeply

my heart was concerned. Once, as the Emperor drove by, she sprang upon a stepping-stone by the way-side, and gave him a loud cheer; he looked out and waved his handkerchief kindly. She boasted much that the Emperor had given her so friendly a token; but I was secretly persuaded that the greeting was meant for me, for in driving past he looked again towards me. Indeed, almost every day that I had an opportunity of seeing him something occurred which I could interpret as a mark of his favour, and in my chamber at night I always knelt before my bed, and held my head between my hands, as I had seen him do on Good Friday in the church; and thus was a private intelligence of love built up within my heart, of which it was impossible for me to believe that he knew nothing. I believe that he had surely inquired out my dwelling, because he now drove oftener through our street than before, and always looked up to the windows and greeted me. Then I may well say that I wept for joy.

"'Once, when he held open table, I pushed my way through the sentinels, and came into

the saloon instead of the gallery. The trumpets were sounded: at the third sound, he appeared in a red velvet mantle, which his two chamberlains took off, and walked slowly, bending his head a little. I was quite near him, not at all thinking of my being in the wrong place. His health was drunk by all the nobles present, and the trumpets crashed in; and then I shouted loudly in concert. The Emperor looked at me, took a goblet to pledge again, and nodded to me; nay, it seemed to me as if he would have brought me the goblet, and I must believe it to this day. It would cost me too much if I were compelled to give up this thought, at which I have shed so many tears of happiness. And why should he not? — he must have read the great enthusiasm in my eyes. At the flourish of drums and trumpets in the saloon, that accompanied the toast in which he pledged the princes, I became quite miserable and faint; so much did I take this imaginary honour to heart. My sister, with a good deal of trouble, got me out into the fresh air, scolding me that on my account she was forced to

lose the pleasure of seeing the Emperor dine: indeed, after I had drunk from the fountain, she tried to get in again; but a secret voice said to me that I ought to content myself with what had been granted that day, and I did not return with her. No, I sought my lonely chamber, and seated myself upon the chair by the bedside, and wept painfully sweet tears of the most ardent love for the Emperor. The next day he took his departure. It was four in the morning on the 17th of April, I was lying in bed, when I heard five postilions' horns blow. This was he. I sprang out of bed; with overhaste I fell in the middle of the room and hurt myself; I took no notice of it, and flew to the window. At that moment the Emperor drove past. He looked up at my window, even before I had torn it open; kissed his hand to me, and waved his handkerchief till he was out of the street. From that time I have never heard a post-horn blow without thinking of this parting; and to this very day, now that I have voyaged down the whole stream of life and am just about to land, its wide-sounding tone painfully affects me, and

that, too, when so much upon which mankind has set value has sunk around me without my feeling sorrow. Must one not make strange comments when one sees how a passion, which at its very origin was a chimæra, outlives all that is real, maintaining itself in a heart which has long neglected all such claims to folly? Neither have I ever had the desire to speak of it: to-day is the first time.

"'In the fall which I then got through over-haste, I wounded my knee upon a large nail that stood somewhat high out of the floor; the sharp head of the nail formed a cicatrice, resembling a very fine and regular star, upon which I looked often during the four weeks in which, shortly afterwards, the death of my Emperor was tolled by all the bells for a whole hour every afternoon.'

* * * * *

"Your mother showed me the scar above the knee, which remained in the form of a very distinct and regular star. * * * In September, while at the Rheingau, I received a letter to say that your mother was not well. I hastened

my return, and went immediately to her. The physician was just then with her, and he looked very grave. When he was gone, she handed me the prescription with a smile, saying, 'There, read: what may that forbode? An application of wine, myrrh, oil, and laurel-leaves to strengthen my knee, which since the summer has begun to give me pain; and now at last water has collected under this scar. But you will see that this imperial specific of laurel, wine, and oil, with which the Emperor is anointed at his coronation, will give me no relief. I see it coming already, that the water will be drawn towards the heart, and then it will soon be over.' She bid me farewell, and said she would let me know when I might come again. A few days afterwards she had me called. She was lying in bed, and said, 'To-day I lie in bed again as formerly, when I was scarcely sixteen, of the same wound.' * * * The next morning she was no more; she had passed away in her sleep."

So ends this strange and fantastic history —

strangely and poetically told. I do not say that none but those who enjoy it can enter into the chambers of imagery in which a Beethoven and a Weber, a Schubert and a Mendelssohn, have found their inspirations.* But it is in spirit as intimately related to their picturesque and descriptive works, as the novels of Hugo and Balzac are akin to the operas of Meyerbeer — that music in which young Paris delights. And, after having been wearied by traces of spurious taste and misdirected patronage of Art in a guise antipathetic to the national humour, as the visitant to the Berlin Opera needs must be, any outbreaks of Nature like the freaks of the old German masters, or the excursive rhapsodies such as the "Letters of a

* "German literature is inextricably interwoven with German philosophy. There is not a faëry tale of Tieck, not a song of Goethe, not a play of Schiller, not a description of Humboldt, in which this under-current is not perceptible: nay, however paradoxical it may appear, I will venture to affirm, that German music has received much of its peculiar character from the same source; that the compositions of Beethoven, Weber, Sphor, Mendelssohn, are deeply tinctured with the same spirit." —*Mrs. Austin's Characteristics of Goethe*, vol. iii. p. 266.

Child" contain, become welcome by recoil and contrast. To myself, one of Madame von Arnim's pages is very like one of Schubert's exquisite melodies; and the hour I spent in her company took me as far away from the frigid and unnatural classicalities in which the patron of Voltaire and Quantz delighted, as if, half a hundred paces from her hotel, I was not to be shocked by the sight of the Library, which, as every guide-book tells, was built in accordance with a whim of Frederic the Great, who desired the architect to take a chest of drawers for his model.

A thoroughly agreeable hour, too, was the one spent in the study of Herr Liepmann. This indefatigable man, as all Europe by this time knows, has found means — by an invention, the details of which are still a secret — to reproduce fac-similes of the works of the ancient painters, so exact as to make many cavillers, in the first instance, foolishly insist that his impressions were but copies wrought by the hand. A small head by Rembrandt, the original of

which had struck me in the Museum, was in every circle and drawing-room, dividing public attention from the yet more miraculous works of that engine of modern necromancy — the Daguérrotype.

But I was more interested by what I heard of the man than even his invention; and my interest was not disappointed on speaking with him face to face. He was living, in September, 1839, in a remote part of the city — the Alexander-strasse. His lodging (for one does not speak of a house in Germany) was up a gloomy and desolate court, approached, of course, by a common stair, which was broken and dirty. The two little rooms appeared yet more squalid than the reality to an English eye, from the uncarpeted floors, and the close, loaded atmosphere attendant upon stove-warmth. A few chairs, and a few copies of the Rembrandt head, formed the principal furniture.

We were ushered into this comfortless place by a pretty fair-haired girl — such an one as Sohn or Bendemann might take as model for one of their female figures. This was an orphan

whom the artist had adopted — his sole confidante — his sole assistant. She watched every question we put with a jealous alacrity, as if (woman-like) she feared that her master's simplicity might allow him to utter the secret her wit knew how to conceal. But, as regarded me, she need not have been uneasy. Satisfied that the copies could not have been brought to so marvellous an identity by any manual process, and unable to have remembered the secret of the method, had I even once understood it, I was much more intent upon the slight, pale, timid man, as an impersonation of steadiness and perseverance, than upon the intrinsic curiosity and value of his invention. Herr Liepmann has the softest German voice that ever spoke to me. A thin and flaxen moustache upon his upper lip added to his appearance of bad health. This, he said, was largely owing to the hard labour which he had undergone to keep life and soul together, while he was making his experiments. Originally a not very successful painter, he had been for years haunted by a notion of his invention; and, in spite of the laughter and

want of sympathy of all to whom he had spoken of it, he had gone on studying the picture in the Museum selected as his first experiment till he had brought it away, to quote his own words, "hair by hair;" and arranging his process—working half the night the while as a manufacturer of sealing-wax, to gain time and *groschen* to bring his plans to maturity. I have never seen any one freer from the conceit and self-assertion so often evident in inventors. He listened to every objection as to permanence, universal practicability, &c. &c. as meekly as if he had never thought of such things before: while the girl, who hung about the door of his sanctuary with her hand jealously upon the lock, looked half out of patience at so much catechising and qualification; and a thoroughly Berlin expression passed over her face when Herr Liepmann said, that, though his labours had excited some interest in England, they had met no encouragement in France. To close the visit, we had the King's letter brought out, which had bestowed upon the inventor an *honorarium*, amounting to some 20*l.* of English

money, with many flattering expressions of admiration and protection.

Since then the art has made great progress: the successful reproduction of a second subject, after a cabinet picture by Mieris, has assured the discoverer that his invention is not limited, as many declared it must be, to freely-touched subjects on a large scale. Notice and honours have flowed in upon him; but I am mistaken if he be not too good a German to have become other than the same simple, unprofessing, uncourtier-like man as I saw in the Alexanderstrasse.

Who knows but that Music's turn is next to come in the century of modern inventions; and that the machine for registering improvisations, which excited so much of Dr. Burney's curiosity when he visited Berlin, may not be all but perfected by some German votary to his art, as patient and self-denying as Herr Liepmann? Instances of industry rise up on every hand in Germany which are positively frightful to people so careless of detail and indolent in research as ourselves. One of the finest collections of

sacred music in the country, belonging to a learned professor of jurisprudence at Cologne, is based upon the scores, to copy which he abridged himself of sleep, while undergoing the severe study of the law, and when unable to purchase. We should do well, in all the arts, to take home examples like these!

CHAP. V.

A LETTER TO A LADY.*

TIRED with strange sights—since, even with Youth's endeavour,
The zest of wandering cannot last for ever;
Tired with strange voices — coarse, and loud, and glad; —
Alone — a little dull — a little sad; —

* —— "sometimes on the road
My dear Mr. Rumble composes an ode."

I had meant to include in my chronicle of mornings in Berlin my ramble through the lonely and umbrageous Thiergarten to Charlottenburg; but I have already so far overpassed my limits as to prefer, because shorter, the rhymes which, following the bad habit of the divine in Hayley's comedy, I strung together as I loitered thither, and on my return. Going, the sun was most oppressive, and the air loaded with exhalations from the ponds with which the Hyde Park of Berlin is diversified: returning, the public conveyance into which I mounted was one, compared with which a Parisian *coucou* is a positive down-pillow on wheels — an English taxed cart effeminately soft. The traces of that hot heavy air, and that punishing leathern *in*convenience, which the verses, I doubt not, bear, may assure those who read them that they are a part of my journal, in its original form, and written as a letter, without the remotest idea of their ever being printed.

Dear Lady, ever present to my thought,
Say, may I tell you what Berlin is *not?*

A wide white city, stretched along the brink
Of the dull Spree, — no river, but a sink;
It could not charm you — if to you, as me,
The trimly-modern brings satiety.
Here, streets in ranks and squadrons are array'd
In one same uniform of dull parade,
As if great Fritz (whose shade, methinks, looks down
A pig-tail'd cherub in a false bay crown,
Simpering to ape the sneer of keen Voltaire
The while he hovers heavily in air)
Had bidden the conscript walls to muster come
By proclamation made at beat of drum.
Yet, many a temple's fair proportion charms,
Where Schinkel mimics all the classic forms,
As like the ancients — ev'n when least he fails —
As is Sans-Souci to the true Versailles,
Or shepherd, with his pipe, on German plains,
To blessëd Arcady's unsmoking swains.

O! far more welcome such old towns to you
As quaint Cranach or Albert Durer knew;

Where stately minster, with its holy bells,
In every chime some pious legend tells;
Where 'broider'd gables totter o'er the streets,
And every passer-by the pilgrim meets, —
The coif'd and wrinkled nurse, who lifts to view
The heavy babe with eyes of china blue,
The square red burgher and his kerchief'd dame, —
Are each a picture in its ancient frame!

Yet, strange to say, despite its lifeless grace,
The seasons seem to doat upon this place:
Ev'n now, — while fierce and devastating rains
Plough up your gardens and lay waste your plains,
And, by hard Common Sense in mockery sent,
Make water-souchey of your Tournament, —
Here stays the sun, as though he hoped to see
Fair Daphne's self in every linden-tree;
Here smiles the moon, as soft, as bright, as bland,
As though Endymion couch'd on Prussia's sand.
I've linger'd in the Palace-court at night,
Lured by the witchery of her blessed light,
And wondering at the faëry work she made
With corridor and arch and balustrade,

Wrapping, the while, in clear sepulchral glow
The silent soldier pacing to and fro,
Till — every earthly cumber cast aside —
I soar'd aloft with Fancy for my guide;
Thought, o'er the lofty window's gleaming glass,
I saw the Lady of the Castle * pass,
Or that forsaken court and gloomy hall
Were lighted for some ghostly festival,
Where, with long locks and sweeping mantles, came
In chill procession many a knight and dame;
Gazed on the pageant with an icy glance,
Where crownëd phantoms swept in solemn dance! —
Then, from such visions down to earth drawn back
By thoughts that haunt ev'n Fancy's wildest track,
My heart, in time gone by, on distant shore,
Past dreams and hopes and pleasures living o'er,
Yearn'd with strong love for those, beyond recall,
Who answer not beneath the funeral pall;
And summon'd next, with like impassion'd prayer,
The few who still support, assist, forbear —

* * * * * * *

* Every guide-book has the story of the Family Phantom of the Prussian Kings, who is seen gliding through their palace shortly before the decease of any member of the royal family.

Nay—this is wanton!——Do not scorn me quite!
Though your poor friend have ta'en so far a flight,
'Tis only transient. Lo! the dream is o'er,
And Berlin shines by day — a handsome bore!
A bore, in whose unvarying gait is seen
The forms mechanical of forced routine;
The soldier's wisdom and the soldier's cares,
His Bobadil approach, his Werter airs:
And here, in truth, 'twould move your mirth to see
How sabre-tash and sentiment agree;
How prim young ensigns sigh (the while they eat)
In *fraüleins'* ears,—fat, melting, half discreet;—
Nay, even the stalwart *routier*, tough as oak,
Embalm'd while living in tobacco-smoke,
Buys not his love with gold — our lure of Age —
But the stale phrases of the comic stage;
And, parting with a comrade, sweetly sips
His "*wiedersehn*" from male, moustachio'd lips!
While thus the town, with military air,
Doth its King's tastes *de garnison* declare,
'Tis whisper'd that, minutest waifs to catch,
Ev'n martinets o'er vagrant words keep watch.
'Twas but the other night I chanced to see . . . . .
Hark! some one knock'd!—— the *kellner*, with my tea!

Truce to state secrets — know ye not full well
Not mine their tangled maze? And must I tell
Of all the shrines which threefold Art uprears? —
Not of the Opera, that would scratch your ears,
As Löwe, with a most tramontane skill,
Screams *Norma*'s passion through a throat of quill;
Nor, knowledge granted, hath my feeble rhyme,
To lead you through that gorgeous temple, time,
Where hard, but life-like, from the canvas start
The darlings of the homely German heart,—
Where Holbein's bearded men their girdles clasp,
And Hemlink's Marys o'er the Martyr'd gasp,
And many a plain old painter holds in thrall
The silenced spirit to an inch of wall.
Leave we these treasures to a fitter fate,
—— —— would laugh, of pictures should I prate!

But one lone temple claims, before we part,
Your poet-worship, and your woman's heart.
Where are we now? The town is far behind, —
No distant hum is wafted on the wind;
In Autumn's mellow noon-tide, scarcely wave
Yon tall columnar pines, that watch a grave,

Lone, but not dreary, — sacred and serene,
Where, sweetly shelter'd, rests a weary Queen *,
Her children's garlands wither'd o'er her head,
But not her children's love! What peace is shed
O'er that mild brow; — how like an angel's fall
Those long chaste tresses 'neath her coronal!
Calmly her claspëd hands her breast enclose: —
You will not weep. O well is such repose!
O well the sleep no battle-clarion breaks —
No earth-cloud dims — no slanderous phantom shakes;
O well when nations such a rest revere!
No pompous verse — no purchased mass is here;
But mothers pray; and, treading small, like birds,
Creep little children, whispering holy words;
And Man's harsh tones drop down, subdued and slow,
Around the couch where the Beloved lies low!

—— Was that the passing-bell? or but the chime
Of the town clocks? I know the fated time;
For here, replete, the weary sons of men
Shut up their doors and hide in bed at ten;

* It is hardly needful to mention Rauch's statue to Queen Louisa of Prussia, as the chief if not the sole attraction to Charlottenburg.

And I, who deem that maxim wisdom true,
To "do in Turkey what the Turkeys do,"
Feel, like the rest, outworn and slumb'rous quite,
And, nodding, wish your Ladyship good night!

Ah! where are *you?* Enthron'd in golden chair,
Watching the great world roll without a care?
Opening with eager lips your stores of wit,
Some falsehood to laugh down — some fool to hit?
Or, with more generous bravery, to defend
The faults and follies of an absent friend?
Heard I my name? and was the vision true?—
Take, then, a rhymester's blessing, and adieu!

Berlin, September, 1839.

CHAP. VI.

QUARTETTS AND AMATEURS.

Berlin in Autumn. — Haydn's "Seasons."— Indisposition to Music. — Herr Zimmermann's Quartett. — Comfort of Chamber Music. — Female Education in North Germany.—The Sing-Academie.—Fasch and Zelter: a brief Sketch of the former. — Imaginative and Eccentric Character. — The Performance I heard. — Haydn. — Mendelssohn. — Amateurs *versus* Professionals. — A worthy "Agnes von Hohenstauffen." — Conclusion.

WHATEVER influences constraint and disunion, patronage capriciously bestowed, and authority turned into an engine of cabal, may have exercised in the Prussian capital to the deterioration of its Opera, they have still not been able to destroy a spirit of strong musical vitality, taking forms too exclusively German to be passed over. There is admirable chamber-music to be heard in Berlin; quartett-playing worth a journey thither to seek; to say nothing of that magnificent institution, the offspring of

Fasch and the god-child of Zelter — the Sing-Academie.

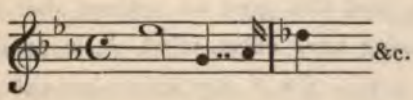
I visited Berlin during its flat season, when the amateurs were taking health at some *brunnen* or other, or pastime among that fine scenery which the Germans enjoy so heartily. The court was at Potsdam for the reviews, with its army of fiddlers in attendance. To a Londoner, then, who is accustomed to the utter pause and desolation which September brings — when the one-eyed street musician, who hobbles along his doleful way, scraping out his surgical tunes, is about the only specimen of the genus Violin to be found; when every *Cello* is holiday-ing it in the provinces, or gone home to Germany to recruit himself; and even Golden Square, that centre of instrumental study, is as guiltless of melody as a Friend's meeting-house; it was a welcome surprise, and an evidence of the wealth of the city, that, at such a stagnant time to collect a quartett was possible, even to the active hospitality to which I was so largely indebted. Yet more remarkable it seemed, that, when collected, the quartett should be one of such rare

excellence as our own metropolis could never match in the very prime of its fullest season.

I had been hearing in the morning two parts of Haydn's "Seasons" performed in the bleak, naked, rectangular Garnison-Kirche, with an indifference ascribable as much to a severe headach as to the moderate excellence of the performance, — music though it be to revive the weary, and give appetite to the satiated, by its exquisite freshness: and, in the waywardness of indisposition, I had half grumbled at the necessity of listening to any thing more that day. Letters had not come when they ought to have come: the weather was airless; the street odours of Berlin anything but Sabean, as the entire flatness of the site renders all kennel-streams stagnant. I was suffering, then, under a *malaria*, which I chose to consider was *not* to be fought off. A potent specific was required to deliver me from the incubus sitting so heavily upon my spirits. I but chronicle this perversity of mind and sickliness of body (the latter, dear nervous reader, depends more closely on the former than you will like to own) to

illustrate the excellence of the tonic which restored me to that eager and enjoying state of attention without which Music has no existence, — on the principle of the extinction of sound in *vacuo*.

Excellent, indeed, was Herr Zimmermann's party, beyond my then experience. I have since heard my friend Herr David lead a similar force at Leipsic, in a yet finer style. In Beethoven's admirable quartett in E flat —



such ease, breadth, and boldness, — such a consentaneous, yet firm, playfulness in its *scherzo;* such a deep, yet uncaricatured intensity in its slow movements — such a spirit and fire in Mendelssohn's quartett in E minor which followed, with just that touch of old-world quaintness which many of his secondary subjects demand — such a French fineness, without French conceit, in the quintett by Onslow which wound up the evening, — one of his later and more elaborate works (which came out

from under their hands, as the old lady said of her daughter's favourite suitor, "quite overboard graceful,")—I must be more languid in body than I was then, and more sullen in mood than I hope ever to be, to partake of such a treat without the liveliest and most pleasurable excitement. After all, there is nothing like chamber-music, heard in one's own chair, and among one's own friends,—music that one can at pleasure stop when the spirit grows dull, and that goes on without that anxious straining after effect, of which, in presence of the public, few if any artists are able utterly to divest themselves. Were I the Duke of ——, I should be largely tempted to imitate Frederic the Great's strong measures employed to obtain La Barbarini, and to send off my myrmidons in search of Herr Zimmermann and his associates.

This admirable quartett is only one among many which Berlin affords for the delight of the winter evening circles of those who are not sold to the exotic opera, and can enjoy, intelligently, music which, according to common

English estimation, is of little use save to make "Quintilian stare and gasp." Herr Zimmermann's party would hardly have played the exquisite and widely-varying compositions of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Onslow with such expression and spirit and unction, had not intelligence been quickened and study encouraged by the attentive and refined sympathy of their audience. "The amateurs in Berlin," says my pleasant predecessor, the author of the "Ramble among the Musicians of Germany," "are all little *maestri;* they dabble in composition, have most of them the score of a mass, sinfonia, or overture locked up in their desks, the consciousness of which helps to sweeten their lives, and gives them the smiling satisfaction which Mr. Bickerstaff discovered in the girl who wore embroidered garters." As much as this I had no means of discovering; but I found traces of taste and knowledge every where, and know that they possess one amateur *pianiste* and composer of force and feeling sufficient to solve, in her own single self, the question of female capacity in the art which perplexed us while study-

ing the "Esmeralda" of Mademoiselle Bertin. Madame H——, indeed, is little less accomplished in music than is her husband in his profession as a painter. I shall never think of the grand oil sketches of heads, taken from the life in Rome, which adorn his *studio*, without a running accompaniment, as it were, of the graceful and masterly compositions in which, by the aid of her exquisite finger upon the pianoforte, she called up her scarcely less characteristic remembrances of their long Italian journey. The solidity of female musical accomplishment in Germany is one of the surest evidences of the deep root which the art maintains in the land. For, be it remembered, this knowledge is found in a society where the housewifery, ridiculously banished from our female education, is practised sedulously and with a cheerful self-complacency; where every room bears tokens of the tapestry-working diligence of its female inmates, — and where in every circle the Englishman runs a good chance of being relieved from his uncouth struggles at German phraseology by being addressed clearly

and elegantly in his own language. How, in spite of the gratuitous demolition of time, caused by early and frequent and long-protracted meals, the German ladies work, upon chairs, screens, and ottomans, so many scenes of Sir Walter Scott, so many sentences of the Language of Flowers, — speak so many languages — astound one with familiarity with so many books — and understand Music so thoroughly, — is a mystery I am unable to this day to solve, and which I leave to all conscientious "principals of seminaries" to examine.

A splendid vocal testimony to their artistic accomplishments is the often-adverted-to Académie founded by Fasch, and brought to perfection by that good man of Berlin — Goethe's friend, and Mendelssohn's master; — the upright and intelligent and liberal Zelter.

Of the services rendered by the latter to Art, and his claim to be numbered among the worthies of German music, as a man of many gifts and pursuits, from all of which he drew something of aliment and support for the one to which his life was devoted, the English

public already knows as much as can be given in sketches as limited as mine. The fund of golden precepts which his letters contain, the honest, zealous, affectionate heart they display, has in some measure been opened to us by critics and translators. No one, indeed, can touch Music in North Germany without drawing upon it for some of the clearest writing, and sincerest thinking, and most healthy feeling which æsthetic criticism possesses. The name of Fasch is less known. It is true that, when Dr. Burney was in Berlin, he was then harpsichord player to Frederic the Great; but some unlucky accident hindered the two from ever meeting; and it is a question whether Burney would have appreciated much in him beyond his fluency of finger upon his instrument. The real musical spirit of Germany, up to that epoch, most strikingly illustrated by the compositions of Sebastian Bach, was but ill comprehended by the courtly and elegant biographer of Metastasio: and though the works of Fasch, as far as I know them, be not altogether guiltless of the Italian cadences and

flourishes which were gathered and combined in the writings of most of the composers of the time, the man seems to have been a true German. Not, however, one of those rough vigorous sons of his country, with a strong mind in a sound body — working hard and hopefully, and taking Life as it comes, without being vexed with the "fever of vain longing," — who make such excellent pillars to the fabric of Art; — but crotchetty, fantastic, as earnest in dreaming as in working. Born at Zerbst in the year 1736, the son of an elder Fasch, who wrote oratorios, and an opera "Berenice" (like all other ancient German operas, long since forgotten), — his zealous and enthusiastic spirit took so devout a direction in music, after hearing a sacred composition by Zelenka, at Dresden, that his father interdicted his frequenting the churches, lest he should become a Catholic. The current of such aspirations must have been strangely checked by his being appointed, in the year 1756, at the instance of Francis Benda, as accompanist to the flute solos and concertos of the philosophical King of Prussia. Small en-

couragement for his religious dispositions was to be found in the sybaritic cabinets of Potsdam! And, whether from having fallen into an ungenial soil, or whether benumbed by a settled engagement, bringing with it a competency, — a condition which has proved so fatal to many a German ambition, as if hunger and thirst were the best incentives to Genius, — it matters little; but many of his years were trifled away among shadows: some in imaginary experiments to improve the arts of warlike attack and defence; some in *building card-houses*, a passion analogous to that of Winter's for dressing up puppet-show Calvaries; some in arranging a table of colours, by which means a *farben clavier* (harpsichord of colours) should be constructed. At another period, he was in the habit of ascertaining, by arithmetical calculations, undertaken the first thing in the morning, whether he was fit to compose that day, or merely to untie those technical puzzles in which the Donnes and Quarleses of Music have always found a whimsical delight. We are told that he was subject to frequent fits of self-

despondency; would destroy his compositions as soon as they were finished: and it seems as if his genius hardly entered freely and fearlessly on its own proper path till he had reached a late period of life, when the fruits of a journey to Italy, and the composition of a sixteen-part mass, in emulation of Orazio Benevoli's famous composition, took the form of his organising an amateur society, which I am inclined to believe remains unique to this day.

Certainly, it is not saying too much, that the performance I heard at the Sing-Academie was worthy of its *habitat*. The concert-room and the chorus were both in the first style of art: the former, by Herr Ottmer,—a long, cheerful, resonant chamber, richly decorated, with its orchestra at one end, and its wide open space in the midst of the room, — took the air of a private saloon, from the ease and good-nature with which its members chatted and talked: those indisposed to sing, lounging on the benches; those who were less indolent, joining the orchestra. There was no ceremony—no stiffness —no time lost in wrangling for parts: each

one seemed to know his appointed place. The conductor, Herr Ungarn, struck a chord on a Collard pianoforte, and off started upwards of two hundred voices in one of Haydn's clear and jubilant motetts, with a sweetness, a certainty, and a refinement I never heard elsewhere. I felt this all the more from having generally remarked that the quality of the stage voices I had heard in Germany was *throaty* and metallic. What amateurs lose in power, they perhaps gain, when well cultivated, in delicacy. It is hard, indeed, to believe that the diction of instructed persons, occupying themselves for their pleasure in works which, being analogous to the highest strains of poetry, give scope for conception as well as correctness, should not be superior to the delivery of a body, which at best can feel but indistinctly—at worst, is but impressed mechanically with the semblance of feeling. If my notion be reasonable, the critical spirit of Berlin, by making its amateurs fastidious as to *nuance*, may here show its bright side.

Mendelssohn's beautiful psalm, "As pants the

Hart," was then admirably sung: and then a complicated composition by Fasch, which, as I heard it, was charming, but, intrusted to a less sensitive body of choristers, must fail in its effect. It is not strange that in the world of Art, as in every other condition and passage of life, the balance should be kept even; and that overweening ascendency should be provided against by the fact, that extreme perfection in the executive machine is apt to tempt the creator away from thoughts to details! The excellence of such a body of singers as the Berlin amateurs present, is certain to seduce one writing expressly for it, into such combinations as can be no where else executed. It was a double, perhaps even a quadruple chorus I heard, supporting a high silvery voice throughout a florid *solo*, with orchestral richness and certainty. I was lost in wonder at the feat; but, on coming away, neither chord nor theme was in my ears. How different was it from my first introduction to the close of Handel's "Israel" — weakly played on the pianoforte, and sung by a handful of coarse and melancholy singers! Yet the leading phrase

of *that* chorus niched itself in my ear, and will remain there till it loses its retentive faculty.

The *solo* was admirably sung by a *débutante;* and it was a pretty sight, when the Academie broke up, to see every one crowding round her with words of praise and encouragement. All seemed union and good understanding there: and, by way of a last sanction to the young lady, as one inevitably destined for great things, ——— approached her with his blandest smile, and a most dulcet "Voilà une véritable Agnes von Hohenstauffen!" The force of applause could no further go.

My journal has rambled on as usual, and given to speculations, perhaps as fruitless as those in which Fasch loved to indulge, that place which ought to have been occupied by the stricter facts; that the Sing-Academie, when I heard it, consisted of about five hundred members who met once a week, — a separate practice being held for the younger and less assured portion of its singers; — that admission was made contingent on a certain amount of musical acquirement and vocal gift; and that, as their beautiful room has cost more money than the amateurs

had to spend, they are obliged to give public performances from time to time to keep the debt down. On these occasions they call in orchestral aid. Had my stars been kinder, I would have described one of these "celebrities" for the benefit of our amateurs; but I have already said enough to the wise, — and to the timid perhaps too much. As I strolled down the Linden that evening, when all was over, listening to the merry talk of the groups as they parted for their homes, and my ears full of a choral harmony finer in quality than they had ever before received, all my cavillings against Berlin were forgotten; and, in the humour of the French widow who heard in the church bells an encouraging "*Prends ton valet*," the clocks, as they chimed seven, seemed to say to me, mockingly, "*You can't do that in Eng-land!*" *

* Were I now to return to Berlin, I should have to discover another interpretation of the chimes; as, even in the last eighteen months, a taste for choral music has so rapidly advanced, that the formation of not one but many establishments, in structure like the Sing-Academie, may be looked for in England as a thing by no means Utopian. — April, 1841.

CHAP. VII.

A GLUCK PILGRIMAGE.—THE "HULDIGUNG" IN 1840.

A Belief in Luck consolatory. — The "Huldigung" at Berlin. — Indifference to move. — Gluck's "Iphigenie en Tauride." —Wretched Night Journey. — Rain and Pageantry. — Arrival at Berlin. — Gay Sight.—Musical Chill.—The Schauspiel Haus. — The Fassmann again. — The Chorus, Orchestra, and Stage Arrangements in Gluck's Opera. — Thorough Disappointment. — Visit to the Exhibition. — Steinbrück's Girl and Elves. — The Illuminations. — Departure. — A Note concerning the Ball, and the new King of Prussia.

WITHOUT a certain superstitious belief in luck, so flattering to that sagacity which would fain never be at fault, and to that enterprise which cannot bear to own itself baffled, save preternaturally, small crosses and disappointments would sometimes be hard to endure. Nothing is so convenient and so soothing as fatalism! The people who are always overturned in whatever vehicle they travel (there are such) set forth on their journeys secure from dismay and surprise.

Those whose lot it is for ever to lose at cards, have the conviction for a warning; and a winning stands them instead of a miracle. I have never returned from a journey without its having yielded me more than I expected in amount of present enjoyment, and of pictures so precious as a treasure stored up against the dark days of laborious confinement or exhausted health. But I must still make an exception or two to this general rule in my own private mind. My luck is to have the stormiest winds that blow, and the roughest seas that roar, whenever I want to travel along "the silent highway" by which, unhappily, every Englishman is compelled to leave his island. My luck it is, never to see Bouffé, or to hear a note of the music of M. Berlioz, in Paris: my luck in Germany is to make vain attempts at rectifying my first judgment of Berlin Opera, and at bringing my voice into concord with theirs who have described it as nothing short of the choicest and most magnificent perfection.

I was never so pleasantly circumstanced for quiet enjoyment — never less disposed to move

— than when I essayed to revise my judgment of 1839, late in the autumn of last year. The best of music and the best of company enjoyed at Leipsic, with such ease and absence of formality as to make me feel them very like home-pleasures, would have tempted me to sit still, if even an ailing body had not chosen, in spite of myself, to confine me to a sofa. It was a drizzling, dreary October Thursday afternoon, closing in coldly and bleakly; the very weather to make an invalid — many days distant from his own books and *piccolo*, and stared at by the cold, glazed, sombre stove instead of being smiled on by his fire (that only companion with whom one is never at odds) — anticipate an evening of choice chamber-music, and the *carte-blanche* "to do just as he liked," with particular *gusto*. "How unfortunate you are!" said ——, who came in to pay me a friendly visit. "They have changed the opera at Berlin to-morrow night, and are going to give Gluck's 'Iphigenie en Tauride.' The letter is only just come. —— has taken a stall for you: you could have got there in time. What a pity you cannot go!"

This was in the week of the "Huldigung," when the nobles of Prussia had prepared for the new King in their metropolis those shows which the limited boundaries of Königsberg, where the monarch was crowned, rendered impossible. Every day's schnellpost had brought us its new detail of the splendours of the *fête* — such illuminations as had never been kindled before — and such a ball as no mortal sovereign ever was bidden to, with concerts, *tableaux*, speeches, and a supper — and *such* a production, by way of nationality, of Auber's pretty, but feeble, "Lac des Fées" at the Theatre of the Caryatides! But, after having run the gauntlet of a long London season, a ball in autumn, in a strange town, was not one of the delights calculated "my mind to move" away from the quieter pleasures I was enjoying; and I had seen the opera in Paris, done in all perfection by Mademoiselle Nau, and Duprez, and Levasseur.

But an opera of Gluck — given in Milder's palace, and on such an august occasion, — that was another thing! I had been accused, on my return to England in 1839, of having list-

ened to German music with uncharitable ears. When I had mentioned my disappointment in the Fassmann, I was told that I could not have heard her: she was nothing save in Gluck's operas — in them superb. Dear reader, of any given age, never believe reserves and qualifications such as these! It is only Cinderella, who is a kitchen maid in the evening, and the queen of a ball at midnight; and nothing short of a faëry grandmother can make a voice, which is destroyed in one character, a nightingale note in any other; or erase the appearances of foresight and study for a single drama only. Such partial praises are always the apologies for weakness. I have even heard people who, in place of being heartily ashamed of our climate in the month of November, will not scruple to assure the stranger — be he even the sensitive Italian, shrivelled to a skeleton by its cold, or blinded by its smoky fogs — that these were phenomena entirely unprecedented, and that London has, in real truth (as meteorological tables would prove), rather more sun than Naples.

These sage considerations, however, did not

rule me, when I was within four-and-twenty hours of Berlin with one of Gluck's operas to be given. On the contrary, the name acted as tonic and cordial: and I had been told I *could* not go. Next to the invitation of a long-desired treat to a *fanatico*, there is no spur like his incapacity being taken for granted by kind counsellors. — At six o'clock I was leaving Leipsic for a night's journey to Berlin.

What a night's journey that was! The North German system of conveyance, which is bound to purvey for every traveller a seat in a carriage — in this indescribably convenient for one who *must* get forward — cannot sweep the roads clear of mud, and does not undertake that the *beichaisen*, to which he is obliged to have recourse, shall be better vehicles than the one in which the redoubtable Knockicroghery drew Lord Glenthorn, in Miss Edgeworth's inimitable "Ennui." The rain, which had for many days been coming down in torrents, that night "fell as if the world were drowned." Half of my fellow-travellers, some forty in number, were wet through before leaving the Leipsic post-

house, — the process being pretty well completed at the first stage, where, on stepping out to change carriages, some of us plunged mid-leg deep into the inky streams with which the high road was covered. Ere we had proceeded for a couple of posts on our way, matters had become too desperate for complaint, — for all, at least, who had not the solace of tobacco — that German bosom-friend! The fumes of "the weed" mingled with the steams from the smoking upper-benjamins and cloaks of the males, and the strong odours of eatables from the provident *sacs* of the gentler moiety of the caravan. A like atmosphere, indeed, I never breathed, save in the *foyer* of the Paris Opera on a masquerade night: both being only flattered by ——'s description when he said, "Talk of air! — I say it was a hot, bad smell!" It was a relief, after two hours of such a Black Hole, in a close six-inside vehicle, to be transferred to an open *britska;* though this was not so screened by rotten curtains of oil-cloth, which refused to draw, but that the icy, steely rain searched every corner of it out. After

all, such nights, even with rheumatic aches to boot, are worse when described than they are when endured. Mine, on the road to the "Huldigung," had its redeeming point, despite the showers and the tobacco-smoke, and a foot which felt like a weight of lead — only that lead is incapable of twinges. The intelligent and sprightly conversation of a lady casually encountered — one of those distinguished women whose age, whatever that be, is the only admirable age, and whose country is intellectual Europe — was worth much inconvenience and a little pain, and has survived in my recollection the bitter air and the blighting rain.

Most disastrous was the work wrought by the latter element on the road. At Delitsch and Bitterfeld, and all the other little towns on the Prussian side of the frontier, the national fancy for garlands had displayed itself, and attempts to do honour to the festival by illumination had been made. But one lamp in three was sputtering out a faint and feeble flame; and when the night-wind rustled the leaves of the evergreen wreaths, a deluge was discharged on the

heads of those entering or issuing from the doors thus graced. The early dawn showed a wretchedly chill and dripping scene; and though, as the day grew older, the sun came out, and the clouds were tossed hither and thither in vast and parti-coloured masses, so as to exhibit a ground of blue sky, the weather remained, to the very gates of Berlin, wild and ungenial—the very worst pageant-weather imaginable. And the holiday dress of the stately city gave a bleak and desolate air of mockery to the draggled crowds under umbrellas that caught the eye whichever way it went.

After driving about for an hour, and, for the one only time in my German experiences, being encountered by extortion in its grossest forms, in despair I found quarters where I should least have expected to find them, in the Hôtel de Petersburgh, under the Linden. Service and ministry of every comfort (and truly I required both) were there afforded me as promptly as if I had been one of the *Grafs*, or Princes, or Countesses whose plumed *chasseurs*, striding about in every direction among their plumed

lords and ladies, gave the court-yard an appearance which whimsically reminded me of Lance's inimitable piece of feather-painting — the tormented jackdaw among the peacocks. If every preparation had not been spoilt by the rain, the show must have been magnificent. I never saw so many fine-looking men in the same narrow space, or so many gorgeous uniforms; and the ladies (though not to compare with an Opera blaze of English beauty, or the galaxy in the Theatre which makes the Dublin Festival incomparable in my remembrance) were some of them well worth looking at, and received the compliment as a matter of course. These gay apparitions, taken in conjunction with food, rest, and warmth, restored me to a belief that a festivity at Berlin must be a very brilliant thing, and that the performance of Gluck's opera could hardly fail to be worth the journey, and the fascinating chamber-music I had left behind me.

Of the earlier ceremonies I heard nothing to make me regret having missed them. The King had been kept in the Dom-Kirche by a

clergyman who had never heard ——'s aphorism, "that no gentleman can keep his congregation entertained longer than twenty minutes;" and, on issuing thence, and taking his place on the throne erected in front of the Palace to receive the homages of his people, he had been reminded of his mortality most cruelly. A sudden burst of the malicious element drenched the fine clothes of the courtiers, laid flat their feathers, and, streaming down the monarch's face, had given it, according to the loyal Rosa Matildas of the Berlin press, only an additional serenity and intellectual glory! "Well," I said, hugging myself with a stupid security, as all these melancholy details were laid before me, "the rain cannot at least have washed away the violoncellos and flutes of the orchestra. Perhaps I was unjust to Fassmann last year. I am going to hear Gluck in all his glory!"

A promise not easy to be kept, as regards that Milton of Music; for—orchestral intricacy and its exigencies laid aside—the art has perhaps no works demanding a higher union

of all the powers which captivate and all that impress than the grand lyrical dramas of the composer of "Iphigenie en Tauride." I know that the master-pieces loved and learned late in one's career are apt to be unduly prized — that, till the time when fond Memory takes the place of judgment, and declares nothing is so delicious or perfect as the music that charmed us twenty years ago, Imagination and Conceit combine to heighten the *gusto* with which works, traditionally considered crabbed, severe, and above common sympathy, are enjoyed. It is a compliment to our own far-sightedness to believe that *we* have the thorough key to their mysteries; and I feel jealous lest, on egotistic and selfish grounds, I may value Gluck's opera-music too highly, because it is one of the last acquisitions I have made, and because the making of it has cost me some trouble — and a night of rain in *bei-chaisen!*

For all these reasons, the reader is spared the rhapsody of anticipation which my journals register. The fulfilment is the thing. This began in a blanking information that, like the

"Der Freischutz" of my first day in Berlin, the opera was to be given in the Schauspiel-haus, with a smaller orchestra and smaller chorus than those of the Grand Opera. The latter was bespoken for the ball. Still I took my seat in the *balcon* of the smaller theatre, though blanked, not hopeless. The work, performed by official command, and during the coronation festivities of a monarch who had even then given indications of strong and large national sympathies, could surely not fail to be well given.

Alas! let no one count upon Royalty being stronger than Luck! The overture to "Iphigenia in Aulis," not remarkably well played, passed over; — and the symphony of the storm, in the midst of which the Priestess enters, upon as fine but as trying a vocal burst as was ever planned by composer for his *prima donna*. But my ear waited and waited in vain. A sound, at once harsh, tough, and feeble, ill represented that splendid invocation of awe and terror; and, but for seeing the distinctive bandeau and wreath, and mystery of many veils (traditionally, as the reader knows, copied from Milder), I

should never have separated the heroine of the piece from the host of screaming satellites who crowded round her, by any predominance of tone, manner, or gesture. It was the very same von Fassmann that I had journalised, and none other! a year worse in voice than she had been in 1839, and not a day better in method than when she dragged Weber's exquisite *cantabiles* out of shape.

The opera was done with much care in stage arrangements, and much liberality as to numbers and costume.* The Scythians danced

* The probability, as well as liberality, of the German stage arrangements struck me forcibly whenever I entered a theatre. One of the most real presentments I ever saw was the scene without the cathedral in the fourth act of Schiller's "William Tell," where the booming of the bells, and the measured thunder of artillery, and the flourishes of wind-music, wafted past on the air, and then trodden out by the sound of many feet, were given with a reality which imposed upon the senses by its force — enhancing the effect of that splendid scene. Modern drama, save perhaps the tremendous interview between Thekla and the soldier in "Wallenstein's Death," has for me nothing more moving than the meeting of Joan of Arc and her sisters, with her dogged, credulous father, who curses her for a wicked sorceress. The acting of the play, as I saw

their ferocious measure in costumes well nigh as savage as those of the *tape-durs** who lorded it in the pits of the French theatres during the days of terror. The Furies, who, by a permissible licence, are preternaturally multiplied in the scene of the vision of Orestes, were sufficiently frightful and ghastly. Nevertheless, in the splenetic mood engendered by vexation and want of sleep, I had something against them also.

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it, was very bad; the Maid of Orleans being personated by a middle-aged woman, little more sylphid in figure than our own Mrs. Glover: but the scene alluded to, as a scene, excited and affected me deeply.

* "The *Tape-durs*," says the writer of M. Fleury's recently-translated "Memoirs of the French Stage," "amused themselves by making a noise in the theatre; singing, or rather roaring, their patriotic songs to the annoyance of all who were less boisterously inclined than themselves. They had not acquired their title of *Tape-dur* quite so early as the 10th of August, but they had long laboured to deserve it. These janisaries of the Revolution wore a peculiar livery: it consisted of wide pantaloons and short waistcoats, with a strange kind of cap, covered with fox-skin, and falling down over the broad shoulders of the wearer; who, moreover, carried about with him, as an auxiliary to this elegant costume, a large knotted stick, which was styled *a constitution*."

They were too tangible, too prominent: instead of being hid among enveloping shadows, with a head or an arm at intervals more distinctly evident — an effect entirely attainable, as many a French *ballet* will testify, — they stood as nakedly out as though they had been so many men and women, applying their snakes to the tormented dreamer very "deedily," as the Hampshire folks have it, and *as if they had been good for his complaint.* I would have forgiven them this, however, or erased such a passage of cavil from my journal, had they only satisfied my ear, and sung in tune; but even this simple excellence was denied me. The chorus was throughout false and coarse: perhaps, on the principle of the white-linen madness of Tilburina's confidante, because their sovereign priestess set them an example.

With her I could only have been satisfied could I have been contented with posture-making, in place of personation. It is true that the graceful and statuesque foldings of her veil changed with every moment to a new and more effective arrangement, but this was done so

obviously and anxiously as to convince me that there lay Iphigenia's heart and treasure: and I could not, for the sake of such drapery-work, forgive defective musical intonation, and the want of that impulse and geniality which, no matter how it be manifested, *must* contribute its share to every performance as distinguished from an exercise. Those might be Milder's robings, but Milder's Greek fire was absent; and the audience ended as it began the evening — cold, and respectful, but unsympathising. It was with an effort that I could remain to see "the charm wound up."

It will serve no good purpose to dwell on the rest of the performance, — on the antiquity of Herr Bader's voice, and the unsuitability of his figure for the part of Orestes. Herr Mantius, as Pylades, delighted me by contrast; and the sweetness of his voice struck me so welcomely as to add another to the long list of assurances that my last year's impressions of the Berlin Opera were neither sarcastic nor uncharitable. As I crept home to bed, more weary in mind than in body, I made a covenant with myself

never again to leave a certain pleasure for an uncertain opera eighteen hours off, though the name of Gluck, and the reputation of a metropolis at high festival-tide, conspired to beckon me.

Betimes in the next morning I went across to the Exhibition to spend an hour, before visits could be admissible, among the modern painters of Berlin. The show was confessedly meagre and inferior — indebted to French artists for some of its cardinal attractions. But one picture, of sweet and delicate fancy, so haunted me as to stand out like a bright spot in the not very bright recollections of the public sights of those two days. It was a very small work by Steinbrück, which, perhaps, I relished all the more from having admired the original sketch a day or two before in ——'s album. The subject was a little girl among elves. The vagrant child has sailed away in a boat, not caring whither, and the waters have floated her into one of those deep woodland recesses where the stream, overhung with trees, is yet more intimately canopied by the large fan-like leaves of water-

plants, so thickly interlacing each other as wholly to prohibit day from coming through, save in a green-tempered light — the very atmosphere of Elf-land! Thus entrapped, the maiden is surrounded by the small creatures of the place. One has leaped into the prow of her shallop — another holds up a rosy shell full of nectar-dew — while a band of yet more graceful creatures, linked hand-in-hand, do their part in arresting her progress, offering her garlands, and gifts, and courtesies. Never was encouragement for truancy so exquisitely painted! The child of Earth is, however, not wholly at ease with her playmates: she stands upright in the midst of the band, half fearful, half pleased. Her sober eye contradicts her saucy lip; and she looks round her with a demure and suspicious glance, as if she knew she was only half worthy of, or only half believed in, the earnest and pretty welcome arranged for her greeting. The picture worthily illustrated one of Tieck's exquisite legends; — and, like the mermaid-music in Weber's "Oberon," or the leading phrase in Mendelssohn's delicious

overture to "Melusine," haunts me to this day with the remembrance of its airy grace and fantastic sweetness.

If I gave the Germans credit for pre-eminence in the fantastic vein in the morning, the illuminations of the evening, incomplete as they were — a *réchauffé* of preparations spoiled by the rain of the preceding night, — riveted me in the conviction that in some things they outdo us in the picturesque. The pair of domes belonging to the churches in the Gens d'Armes Platz, which, with the Schauspiel-haus, make such an effective architectural group from whatever side contemplated, were surrounded with rings of blue and crimson and yellow light — less brilliant than the gas illuminations which, with us, produce such strong contrasts when relieved against the intense sky of night, but of a more harmonious variety and sweetness. The bronzes, again, at either extremity of the Museum were, by some unseen contrivance, so felicitously presented, that the figures seemed balanced in air upon a field of light.

I paused long to admire them. It was tantalizing to be compelled to take up my staff and return, just when the elements had begun to show more clemency, and when every kind voice was inviting me to remain for the magnificent *fête*, the preparations for which in the Opera House * had so cruelly traversed

* The accounts of this festivity furnish another proof of that closer love of the picturesque on the part of the Germans than we possess, and their more constant desire to give Art its due place in all pageants and public celebrations, to which allusion has been already made. One of the principal features at the ball was a series of *tableaux vivans*, arranged by the most eminent painters of Berlin, representing scenes and groups from the history of Brandenburg, beginning with the days of Frederic I., Burggrave of Nuremburg (1417), and coming down to one of Frederic the Great's Potsdam concerts, with a flute solo, performed as in order due; and Mara's nightingale air, "Mi paventi," executed by Mademoiselle Löwe. This representation, described to me as got up with every conceivable splendour, had been preluded by the performance of Gluck's overture to "Armida," and a prologue spoken by Madame Crelinger.

It ought to be added, that the spirit of this inauguration Festival seems to have been worthily borne out by the present King of Prussia's magnificent and wise patronage of the men of literature, science, and art of his own coun-

my desire to see a work of Gluck's worthily represented. But the temptation was not to be yielded to; and I set forth to return to Leipsic, through another night of *bei-chaisen* and tobacco-smoke, gratified to have a pleasant parting impression of a city which I fear I may be thought to have visited in the humour of —— or ——, rather than in that amiable and placable frame of mind which should distinguish the *fanatico*, — or his love for "the concord of sweet sounds" means nought, if Shakspeare was a true poet.

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try. Under such a reign there is every hope that musical Berlin, ten years hence, will be far different from the Berlin of 1839 and 1840, sketched by me. Every step taken by the new government seems to be wise, liberal, — and national.

MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

FRANCE.

PARISIAN AUTHORITIES.

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CHAPTER I.

FRENCH CRITICS. — THE JOURNALISTS.

Prominent Position of Music in Paris.—Writers on the Art. — A dangerous Subject.—The Journalist in a Garret.— The Journalist in a Palace. — M. Balzac. — M. Janin. — Madame de Girardin. — M. Karr's humorous Account of the Reading of her Comedy. — The Style of the Journalists of Paris. — MADAME PREVOST'S BOOK, by M. Janin. — Effects of Style upon Criticism. — The Honesty of the Journalists. — A true Story of M. —— and L'Ecole Polytechnique. — Style and Honesty brought to bear upon Music. — M. Berlioz.

THE writers upon Art in Paris are a subject neither to be escaped from, nor handled easily. While pointing out the characteristic features of the musical world of the French, it is

impossible not to advert to the quantity of words expended upon its cares and concerns by the literary as well as the professional men of the day. There is hardly a circle, be it ever so grave, where the art is not discussed with a fluency and a decision startling to an Englishman, who has become used, owing to the bad habits of a century, to hearing Music mentioned in intellectual society with apology and hesitation. There is hardly a journalist addicted to *les belles lettres* who does not give Music a turn in the course of his month's labours, and vent his pretty paragraphs, not merely in praise or attack of Madame Thillon, the graceful and coquettish little Englishwoman at the Opera Comique, — or Mademoiselle Heinefetter's chances of keeping her ground at L'Académie, — not merely concerning the wild *entrechats* of Mademoiselle Maywood, the American (who should wear a branch of wild vine round her head, or an Indian cincture of feathers, when she dances, so national are her graces) — or the majestic attitudes of Mademoiselle Theresa Elssler, or the brilliant pantomime of her

incomparable sister, — but in eulogy of the grand names and immutable principles of Gluck, Bach, and Palestrina.

But the necessity of alluding to those who influence public taste, in a sketch which refers as much to the social position of Music as to its intrinsic wealth or poverty for the time being, does not make the task easier. Can one forget that, after the publication of certain of the "Pictures of the French," "The Grocer" wrote a letter to M. Balzac, containing a spirited attack on that gentleman, besides vindicating "*l'esprit épicier*" under the charge of "fat, contented ignorance" by him brought against it? — that the *figurantes*, raising their pretty voices with shrill accord against M. Philibert Audebrand, who had sketched a type of their class, entered into a close confederacy that no piece of his, were it tragedy, comedy, opera, melodrame, or vaudeville, should ever again make its way to the boards of the Parisian theatres? What, then, reasoning analogically, may not be apprehended by a stranger — and one, therefore, at best more imperfectly familiar with the world behind the

curtain — who ventures to speak of the critical world of Paris, — of the life, manners, and conversation of its members, as influencing the progress and stability of Art?

The task would be hopeless, as well as ungracious, had not the class in question, partly in jest, partly in earnest, described itself. To begin with the Press. It is needless again to point out how Journalism in Paris — instead of creeping into corners as with us, and using every possible shift to get rid of responsibilities and to disclaim an identity which ought to imply qualities at once solid and shining, information and promptitude — is like Wisdom, and "crieth in the streets." You may touch it, taste it, handle it. You may meet it in a minister's *salon* or at a duchess's private concert; you may hear it bargaining at the *coulisses* with an audible "How much?" clinking in money paid, and laughing at its no conscience over a third bottle of champagne in every third *café* along the Boulevards. "Vive la Bohème!" seems to be the motto of its life. You will encounter the *feuilletonist* one year in all

the slovenly misery of a room which, like the cobbler's dwelling in the song,

. . . served for parlour, and kitchen, and hall!

breathing an atmosphere of tobacco and odours yet less Sabæan. There he sits, knee-deep in wood-ashes; otherwise only one quarter clad in a wretchedly-worn dressing-gown tied about his waist with a ragged silk handerchief, on his head the ruins of a gay Greek cap whose faded embroidery tells of some long-past *liaison:* as foul, disputatious, and rudely-spoken a *mauvais sujet* as ever took pen in hand to pierce a reputation, or to spice a scene for the gross public's digestion. Then, dirt is asserted as a Spartan's self-denial, and a ragged coat as a badge of incorruptibility. You will hear from him the unflattering truth of art and manners. He will tell you of such an actor's cupidity, or such a painter's vanity; how such a *danseuse* was compelled to fail at the Opera because M. le Marquis *un tel* was unable to strike a bargain with her: you will learn the precise sum that —— expended in bringing out his own play, and *fête*-ing all such guardians of the public

taste as will sell themselves for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread. And you will retire — if very young — from the hug of the unwashed garret genius in a mingled state of admiration at the honesty of the Parisian *littérateur*, and suffocation with the evil odours (not air) he breathes. Innocent visitor! those foul odours will have vanished before you return. The honesty was gone long ago!

Come back in three little months, and you shall find that the Journalist has exchanged "the chamber in the wall" for the most magnificent apartments of a superb hotel. Aladdin's ring never worked greater wonders. There sits the Power you left so turbulent, so unpurchaseable, so greasy, so unshorn, — like Malvolio, "in his branched velvet gown, having left Olivia sleeping." A writing-table is beside him, but with more bouquets than pages of manuscript upon it. The Sèvres cup which holds his coffee is worth his month's revenue when you saw him last. *Vive la Bohème!* Your host is playing the part of a man of pleasure, and must suit his conversation to the company he keeps. Ask

him for Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas, and, playing with his diamond ring, he will tell you of the fine *esprit* of Madame *une telle*, — of the exquisite *marivaudage* of "*cette chère comtesse*" such another. The men you inquired for were coarse, *passé*. Should your English simplicity lead you to name Paul de Kock, he draws up. You are *too* indelicate. Even De Lamartine hardly escapes — he is so cold, so pedantic, so pompous. Talk of either opera if you are musical, and your enthusiasm shall be quenched by a yawning complaint that Duprez is already *perruque;* has nothing of the tone of good society, — that Rubini is tolerable in half a song, — that Grisi has grown insufferably fat and hoydenish, and Taglioni been sent to (where is the *French* Coventry?) ever since she chose to give brandy and train-oil breakfasts to the Russian barbarians. A silver bell tinkles; and though your host will say "Let her wait," you are bowed out in the midst of such a shower of fine words, — for silence is beyond the Journalist's attainment, though he rise to the seventh heaven of Fashion, — that, whether you laugh

or whether you believe, you are quite sure that the magnificent and *recherché* personage you have left cannot be your friend *au sixième* of the cheapest *rue* in the Faubourg!

Come back once more (when the leaves have fallen), and you may, perhaps, find him restored to his plainness of speech and a garret again; the diamond ring gone, and the Sèvres cup left behind for some less demonstrative successor!

I am not drawing an imaginary picture, but describing what I have seen. Yet, lest any one should think I have aped the tone of those whose influence upon Art I would fain discuss, and have "rouged Truth" in painting contrasts, I can but point to the wonderful mass of words, not without its kernel of thought as well as its clothing of fancy, which M. Jules Janin has poured forth: — now describing the sewers, the *abattoirs*, and the kennel-trades of Paris, with a squalid and noisome force which bears internal evidence of intimate experience; — now fluttering over the artificial delicacies of Marivaux and Dorat (a grasp would destroy them),

to bring their *nuances* into light, with as exquisite and fastidious a delicacy as if his hand were familiar with nothing besides the lace ruffle and the brilliant ring and the enamelled *tabatière* of the Damises and Philintes of the Regency.—And in every line, however it be mystified, there is personal confession as well as personal allusion. I can but point to M. Balzac's fearful and forcible novel, "Un grand Homme de Province à Paris;"—a piece of morbid anatomy, which takes a double strangeness from M. Balzac's subsequent adherence to the very journalism he has there analysed. I can but point to Madame Emile de Girardin's "L'Ecole des Journalistes," a comedy yet more incomprehensibly written to stigmatize a class * to not the first ranks of which its authoress belongs — and not written anonymously: a comedy read, too, publicly to the outraged guild, some of whose members

* One of the main incidents of this comedy is the death of a veteran artist, who has been stung into suicide by newspaper sarcasms. Another (in this, real scandal was followed closely) is a quarrel raised between a public man and his wife — the latter being taught by the journalists to be *jealous of her own mother!*

had assuredly sat for their portraits. London comedy has no such scenes as the confection of the journal, which forms the first act of Madame de Girardin's work; —— Street or —— Square no such gatherings as her reading party; and our fashionable and artistic intelligence of the year 1839 no such entry as the following account of the above, in "Les Guêpes," by no means to be omitted from a chapter of Illustrations of French Journalism: —

"It was the evening," says M. Alphonse Karr, "when 'The Murder of the Innocents' was played at the Théâtre de la Gaieté. Scarcely a single writer charged by the journals to give an account of theatrical representations was to be seen in the theatre. The most influential among the *feuilletonists* had received a letter couched thus: — '*M. and Madame Emile de Girardin request that M.* ——— *will do them the honour of passing the evening of Tuesday, the 12th of November, with them, to hear the "School for the Journalists." — Nine o'clock.*' — In a drawing-room hung with green, and decorated with rich and elegant simplicity, were assem-

bled MM. Hugo, De Balzac, Etienne de Jouy, Lemercier, Ancelot, E. Sue, Emile Deschamps, Malitourne, Roger de Beauvoir, De Custines, Madame de Bawr, Madame Gay, Madame Ancelot, Madame Menessier. Many women of fashion — some clever, some pretty, — one both — many distinguished artists, &c., were there. But especially might be remarked, among the company, all the monarchs of the *feuilleton*, with M. Jules Janin, their master, at their head. There, too, was represented 'The Murder of the Innocents!'

"The Herod of the drama was not long in appearing: — a young lady, at once finely and firmly formed, like an antique Muse; her beautiful features set in a frame of splendid fair hair. She was dressed in white, and resembled, at no great distance, the *Velleda* of M. de Chateaubriand. She took her place, and began to read a series of fine and clever verses, which provoked in the minds of many the smile which they checked ere it rose to the lips, — a satire against the journalists. The first act finished in the midst of applause. Madame de Girar-

the brink a glass of water; and I trembled. The flower of our journalists were there; and, while ices and confectionary were served to them, I bethought me of the poisons of the Borgias. But what were my feelings when I perceived that almost every man had on his back a white mark? I remembered the *missions* to the church of Les Petits Pères, in the time of the Restoration. It was thus that the agents of the police singled out in the church those troublesome spirits who were poignarded on issuing thence. These two remembrances crossed each other, and I remained uncertain — not whether the five-act comedy would have a sixth act of tragedy, — *that* was past doubt; but whether it would finish like 'Bajazet,' when the Sultana dismisses the hero whom her mutes await at the door to strangle with her terrible 'Sortez!' — or like 'Lucrece Borgia,' when the heroine bursts forth upon the banquet-guests of her son Gennaro, with '*My lords! you are all poisoned!*' The reading, however, or rather the execution, went on. Some of the gentlemen, who knew by sight the gentlemen of the

press, pointed them out to the people of fashion who did not know them, and applied to each, in his turn, the few lines which were read while the victim was undergoing examination. It was, I assure you, seriously embarrassing; and I thought myself happy to have been only a journalist of passage, and no more. Keen sayings, charming verses, things epigrammatic, true, and unjust, poured out of the mouth of our Herod! There even came a dramatic scene of a high order, beautiful and very well written; and (as Janin * declared in his reply to Madame de Girardin) better delivered than any actress of the Théâtre Français could have delivered it. All this while, M. Emile Deschamps was reiterating at every verse what he always reiterates at such readings, — '*Chā-ming! chā-ming!*' * * *

"The reading was over: not so the martyrdom of the journalists. Madame de Girardin was

* After this reading, the king of the *feuilleton* addressed one of his most graceful and sprightly pieces of writing to the lady, remonstrating against the unfairness and severity of her portraiture, and asking her whether she had not too much confined herself to the kitchen of journalism!

surrounded. Some cried, "O the monsters!" others, "You have given them too much wit; they have not as much as that!"—a pleasant hearing for the practitioners in presence! Nevertheless, no one was strangled; no one died of "The School;" the white marks on the backs of the party turned out but to be the consequences of an ill-timed painting of the doors, done by an awkward upholsterer. The day after, no journalist was to be seen in his coat. It was at the scourer's, and its owner in a pea-jacket!"*

Vive la Bohême! Such a life of jugglery and banter and self-exposure, joined with an attempt to lead and to influence,—such a parti-coloured, animated, gipsy existence, assuming Paris to be the world, which it is to every Frenchman,—has not only a charm and an excitement, but also a poetry of its own, suited to the wants of the time. The man who has kept all sorts of company, from King Cophetua down to the beggar-maid, runs a far better chance of being able to amuse the mob who now read, by his variety of illustration and fami-

liarity of appeal, than the wit of the *Mercure* of other days, who vibrated between the *salon* of his elected Geoffrin or Lespinasse and the *salon* of the Academy, and, having arranged his life in accordance with his humours and appetites, rarely ventured beyond the self-prescribed orbit. The Bohemians of Paris (they have taught me the name themselves) possess a style shaped and coloured by the vicissitudes they plunge into, — surprising by the inexhaustibility of its elegant pleasantry, and by the scintillations of a fancy whose faëry-land, however, lies rather in the Palais Royal than the Athenian wood or the Ardennes of the true poet. The haunter of the *cafés* and *spectacles* of Paris will again and again stumble upon fragments of rhapsodical criticism, which, but for this town modishness, as contradistinguished from the air of the country, are almost worthy of being compared with the poetical *extravaganzas* of Christopher North; or snatches of sentimental romance which, of their kind, are unparagoned. I know not where, for style, incident, and (fantastically to speak)

perfume, a prettier type of modern Paris could be found than in the following gossamer fiction; the best paraphrase of which, however, in our more muscular language, would be almost like "a lubberly post-boy" in place of the real Anne Page.

Madame Prevost's Book.

BY JULES JANIN.

"You have permitted to die, while I was away, one of the most amiable women of whom the trade of Paris could, by good right, boast itself, — Madame Prevost, the florist of the Palais Royal. Not far from the gloomy corridor which leads to the stage of the Théâtre Français, behind an enormous pillar, was hidden in the stone, like a violet under a leaf, the shop, or call it rather the parterre, of Madame Prevost. A perennial parterre it was, subject neither to Winter's cold nor Summer's heat of the sun, nor dust, nor storm. A perpetual spring inhabited that massive pillar; — the rose of every season, the pale violet, the modest anemone, the superb camellia, the fra-

grant pink, the dahlia now become vulgar, were more at home in its protecting shadow than in any other place. On its square of four feet the Parisian Flora emptied all the treasures of her basket, from the orange-flower, that coronal of queens, down to the humble daisy. Over this fair garden presided and reigned an amiable and benevolent woman, who had placed it, as by enchantment, in the midst of the diamonds, the paste, the new clothes, the stunted trees, the abortive flowers of the Palais Royal, and its vices, premature as its flowers. For most of the persons who entered those splendid galleries, —the man fresh from the provinces, who arrived only yester-evening; the rapacious Englishman; the loitering grisette; — for all those idlers in the sunshine who have eyes to see nothing, and ears to hear as little, the shop of Madame Prevost had no existence, — she herself even had never existed. Who, indeed, could stop to look at a few gentle flowers, when Chevet, hard by, displayed his flaming lobsters?

"But because it was so hidden, so little known, so concealed as in its own fragrance, the shop

of Madame Prevost was only all the more precious to those frequenting it. It was (so to say) the antechamber of all the loves of twenty; it was the *rendezvous* of all innocent passions, of all permitted coquetries,—of all elegance taking its fairest forms. The young lady — Parisian in her youth and in her lady-*hood* — never passed before that unobtrusive garden without remembering, with a sigh, the first flower she had placed in her bosom. At every hour of the day, you were there offered, as your fancy sought them, finished idyls — tender elegies — eloquent poems; all ready made, and yet all written on purpose: the only *billets doux* which a woman will never refuse. At your need, you would have found at Madame Prevost's the universal language so much sought for by the philosophers. Thus, then, that amiable woman reigned over all the ambitions of youth; and kept in her delicate and ever-open hand the secret of the sighs and the loves of all the world; and, hidden as she was, was the most popular woman of Paris, in the separate world of youth and beauty. * * * She had been herself very

beautiful; and one look at her faded countenance, shrouded among its laces, was sufficient to inform you that she, too, had her own love-story to tell. There was a veiled acuteness in her glance: her smile was sweet and calm, but it came rarely. She had all her life had a passion for flowers: not only did she cultivate them with unequalled success, but no mortal hand knew how to combine and arrange them with such art and taste. She would make a bouquet with as much earnestness as Cardillac the jeweller, when he was showing one of his *chefs-d'œuvre*. When it was made, she would keep it in readiness for her who was beautiful enough to wear it; and if none such came that day, Madame Prevost kept her bouquet for herself, and was contented. To ladies who passed and purchased a nosegay by chance, she would give what she had made by chance: to the husband, who bought a bouquet for his wife as he would have bought a doll for his child, she cared not what she sold, — so well she knew that it would neither be looked at by him who gave, nor by her who was to wear it! She had wares

suitable for every age, for every position in life. She could see, in an instant, what flower she must employ to save a poor heart which was going to ruin, — to reanimate a love which was waning. * * * So far had she carried the science of this emblematical language, that, in her later years, she invented the most malicious epigram ever made against the gentlemen and ladies of the theatre. Taking a handful of hay, and disguising it by a few flowers of lively colours, she would make what she called her '*bouquets comiques.*' 'Good enough,' she would say, 'to throw at the heads of those ladies and gentlemen. What! profane real flowers by casting them at such beings! Abuse the rose! — degrade the camellia! — pour forth my poor treasures to wither, in return for a *roulade*, a burst, a tirade? No, my ladies and gentlemen, I will have no part in such profanations. You shall have some hay,—and, as the proverb says, *the useful and the agreeable combined!*' And, in fact, nothing was so amusing as to see her composing her *bouquets comiques* of hay, lucern, cress, and a few coarse flowers bought

at the Halle: when they were made, she would cry laughingly, 'Only look at my shower of flowers!'

"It was not every one whom this excellent woman would admit to her acquaintance — I will not say her intimacy. Her parterre, it is true, was open to all; but there the common right ended. You entered, you made a purchase, you asked her advice, which she never refused; but then you gave up your place, not to new comers, but to the new comer, for her shop only held one single person. Madame Prevost did not like to part with her flowers in public. She said that the choice of a bouquet is already a mystery, and that to treat flowers like a common present was to take away their perfume. 'Do not talk to me,' she would add, 'of those coarse men who buy nosegays for their mistresses as they would melons for their table! — people who stop at the corner of the street at a fruit-merchant's shop, thrust their red noses into one melon after another, handle one, pinch it, bargain for it, and carry it off in triumph in their hot hands! Fair and good — they under-

stand their business; but let them come here to paw and to pull about my flowers — I would not even sell them a bunch of thorns! And then, do you not see yonder foolish being, who wanders along the *trottoir*, bouquet in hand, as if he said to his neighbours, "Look at me in my nankeen pantaloons and velvet waistcoat: it is I who am paying court to Madame ——, who lives at No. 20. *à l'entresol.*" ' When Madame Prevost was in this humour, she was charming. Her black eye lighted up, and she would smile; and in both eye and smile was a certain ridicule, from which no one would have escaped, if there had not been behind that, grace, *esprit*, and a tender heart, which had compassion upon every weakness, even that of vanity. * * *

"Little by little, — owing to my reserve, my prudence, and my awkwardness, and by only buying bouquets on the *fête* days of Saint Anne, Saint Mary, and Saint Louis, — I was taken into the confidence of Madame Prevost, and into her back shop. This was nothing less than her laboratory, — a sort of reserved garden, where the rarest plants were

jealously tended. There reigned and lived their mistress — there abandoned herself to her melancholy study of the human heart, there composed her master-pieces of a day — what do I say? — of an hour, which were to bloom in ephemeral triumph in the delicate hands or on the fair bosoms of the loveliest beings in Paris. Into this sanctuary, where few men were seen, entered familiarly for many years the only person who had a right to be there, — Redouté, the van Dyck of our gardens, and the companion of their fairest flowers. They presented themselves to him as the Three Goddesses presented themselves to Paris. To look at that gross shapeless hand, and that coarse, shrewd, good-humoured head of his, you could hardly believe that he was that Redouté who in all his life never crumpled a rose-leaf, and could have made the bed of Sybaris without an accident. Redouté was naturally the friend of Madame Prevost. * * I nevertheless made good my footing; and, after some first moments of jealousy, Redouté adopted me, and I was installed in this sanctuary forbidden to all the world, where no one

could see me — happier and prouder of my post than if I had gained the much-coveted honour of sitting beside Madame Chevet at her desk! This sanctuary overlooked the shop by means of a window. Once there, I could see, and I have seen, many a little drama, begun in a sprightly mood, to end fearfully. I have been present at many a whimsical or painful comedy: I have learned many a secret I shall never tell — many a treason no one would believe. Had I not retired in time from this dangerous study, I too should have become a misanthrope, — have conceived a hatred for the world and its crimes, so daintily masqueraded! How many a time has Madame Prevost said to me, by her finger on her lips, 'Hush! you are not to listen: do as Redouté does, and pretend you are admiring my flowers!'

"One day I was alone in this *sanctum* (Redouté was gone to the King's garden at Neuilly to pay his devotions to some flower or other he had christened with a barbarous Latin name), when my hand happened to fall upon a small book, bound in green, which had the appear-

ance of an account-book. I opened it without thinking. What was my astonishment, I may say terror, to find that I had fallen into the midst of the most secret history of Parisian life! A fearful and touching history of faithlessness, and falsehood, and betrayal; but also of devotion, passion, and fidelity. It was there that Madame Prevost entered day by day (as in a ledger) the names of those who ordered flowers from her, with a '*To be sent to Madame* ——, *Rue* ———.' Such was the book. A man's name, and written, opposite to it, the name and the residence of a woman: and yet — will you believe me? — never did one of M. Balzac's romances, even in his best days, when the harvest of his brain and heart was the richest, present an interest equal to those simple names! A person sends a modest bouquet of violets to one who accepts them; the violet becomes a rose; then every day some new flower is added; and then every day some flower taken away; till, at last, the two names no longer are coupled. Did you but know the

short life of those *grandes passions;* as eternal—as the roses!

"Turn another page—let me read on. To-day the sender has ceased to offer his remembrance to its object: but, at the moment when one bouquet dwindles, another is seen arising on the horizon. Through such dim and flower-shaded paths you may trace the history of Love in Paris! Strange, too, how names are connected by this link of flowers, the casual meeting of which you would have thought impossible! Strange the chains which are in turns broken, mended, destroyed!—what bouquets sent and returned!—what a singular and incredible mixture of gallant adventures and fatal events! Here is the bouquet which *she* wore the day her lover was killed in a duel; and the bouquet was not the lover's! I know now where the flower came from, Coralie, which was in your hair that night, and which you said you had gathered in your father's garden!—Louisa, my poor child! I understand the history of the withered blossom beside your pillow at the foot of the crucifix.—Here is one who

has received a rose; soon after, an orange-flower for her wedding: there is *one* happy being, at least! Alas! hard by, is a coronal of amaranths for the young husband to throw upon his wife's tomb!—Such were the contents of that fearful book. * * *

"So absorbed was I in its perusal, that I did not hear the entrance of Madame Prevost, who returned laden with the fragrant treasures the gardens had given her. 'Ah!' cried she, seeing her open book before me, 'what have you done?'—and she took it out of my hands with an air of displeasure and sadness. I knew what she would say, and asked pardon. 'You are sufficiently punished,' she said, gently: 'though you have only read the first pages of the book, you have seen enough to guess at the weakness and treachery which the world contains. You have seen what this world, so brilliant, so polished, so serene, is made of: you have seen what corruption my flowers cover. * * * But the fault is mine rather than yours. I have not only allowed you to possess yourself of my secret, but the secret also of poor Parisian

society. Give me your honour, that no name you have seen written in my book shall pass your lips.'

"She had done; and, closing her book with care, betook herself to her daily task. It was now almost four o'clock — the hour when the Parisian lady, till then indifferent and languid, begins to remember that the *fête* of the evening expects her. I profited that day by my involuntary indiscretion. Madame Prevost forgot to say to me 'Go, now!' as she usually did; and it chanced, therefore, that I became a witness of, and almost an actor in, a little drama, which I may tell you without blame, because it is not written in her book.

"It began by the entrance of a tall, fresh-coloured man, of forty or thereabouts, — an unfinished dandy, who, to be a complete one, would have been obliged to retrace a few years, so awkwardly did he wear his hair, his gloves, and his cane: otherwise he was well enough for the Parisian of the provinces that he was. 'You will take,' he said, without preamble, 'a bouquet to Madame Melcy, Rue

——, and Hotel ——;' and he threw down abruptly two five-*franc* pieces on the counter.

"Madame Prevost followed him with her eye till he had disappeared in the court of the Palais Royal. 'He shall have one for his money,' she said; and of two bunches of common flowers, thrown carelessly into her basket, she made a bouquet; adding, by way of a finish, an enormous tuberose with large leaves. 'Why, you will poison the poor lady!' I said to her. 'I will preserve her from the pursuit of an impertinent fool,' was the answer. 'Do not be uneasy: if she have only nerves (I will not say a heart), she will throw the bouquet out of the window, and deny herself to the man who has sent it. What a clown! to attack Madame de Melcy, so pale and so delicate as she is! Take this bouquet,' she said to a commissioner, 'with the gentleman's card' (he had left it) 'to Madame de Melcy's.' The Mercury departed, holding the nosegay in his two hands. He had stuck the card in the midst of the tuberose: the name upon it was surmounted by the equivocal coronet of a count or a baron.

"'The stupid man!' exclaimed Madame Prevost. While she was speaking, a younger gentleman, at least twenty-nine years of age, came in. He was fat, and had a sufficiently knowing eye; but the rest of his person was so gross, that the glance was lost on so massive a face. Evidently he had been better brought up than the other. He was a shade more tolerable than a Parisian of the provinces;—he was one of the provincials of Paris, who, by residing there, have caught, if not elegance and grace, at least scepticism and *esprit*. 'Madame,' he said to Madame Prevost, 'you will send a bouquet for this evening to Madame de Melcy.'

"When he was gone, 'Here,' said she, 'I shall be neuter—I will neither do him good nor harm. Madame de Melcy shall have a bouquet like every body else;—a few fine dahlias, and some flowers with no scent, that she may wear in her hand, or place in her belt. He may have done wrong to send a bouquet to the lady, but I shall not concern myself in the matter—let him take care of himself.' As soon said as done. Madame Prevost made up

a second bouquet, less coarse, less fragrant, and much less ridiculous than the first.

"This second bouquet despatched, I was on the point of going; when there crept into the shop a handsome youth of eighteen, as trembling and as timid—positively blushing even—as if he had been entering the presence of the lady of his vows. 'Madame,' said he, half inaudible, 'would you have the goodness to send some flowers, without mentioning from whom they come, to Madame de Melcy?' And he offered Madame Prevost a *louis-d'or*. Little astonished at this third arrival, she gave him back seventeen *francs* out of his *louis;* and when he was gone, 'For him,' she said, 'I will do something. Young, handsome, timid, and modest, not wishing she should know where her flowers come from;—I will protect him.' And while she spoke, she took almost by chance out of her basket a few very simple field-flowers, of soft colours and gentle scent, and put together a nosegay one might have gathered in a meadow in June. A fancy seized her, and she placed in the midst a sprig of thyme in flower. I watched

her as she went on. 'It is impossible,' she said, in explanation, 'that Madame de Melcy should not choose this among the three bouquets. The first, with its coarse red flowers, is only fit for a butcher's wife; if a lady were to wear it, she would look as if she had been drinking: the second is too colourless for a pale and languid creature like Madame de Melcy: this, on the contrary, looks lively and modest, like no other one—it will be worn this evening. Are you not on my side? Do not you, too, patronise this young man?' she added, with a smile.

"'To-morrow I will,' was my answer.

"'And what are you doing to-night?'

"'Going to the Opera.'

"'Much good you will do. Will you have a bouquet—I mean a real bouquet this time—to offer, on our behalf, to Mademoiselle Taglioni?'

"It was, in fact, the night when that Marvel of the Air—so light in her step that the very birds might envy her—took leave of us. We were about to lose, if not for ever, at least for a long time,

that admirable creature. All Paris was at the Opera, to see once more its darling idol. The theatre was full to overflowing. I was early in my place, in a box to the left *au seconde*, thinking of the great loss which was about to befall us, when the door of the box next to mine opened suddenly, and two ladies, one very young, the other not very old, placed themselves in front; three gentlemen behind them, — the eldest on the next seats, the youngest on the bench at the back. Judge of my amazement when I recognised the three men I had seen at Madame Prevost's!—the tall, confident, noisy gentleman; the other, fat, and quiet, and worldly-wise; and the boy who nursed his good fortune in secret. The middle-aged lady carried in her hand the huge red nosegay: her young companion adorned her flexible and graceful figure with the field-flowers; they seemed made for her, and she for them, — her bloom was as pale as if it had been the reflection of the daisies: from time to time she seemed to inhale the faint odour of the thyme. I could, with all my heart, have acquainted the *protégé* of Madame Prevost with

the whole of his good fortune . . . but the young enthusiast was not in a state to hear anything.

"The spectacle began. What am I to say of Taglioni? — she was admirable; and yet, that evening, I was equally divided betwixt the goddess and Madame de Melcy, — betwixt Earth and Heaven; the one was so graceful, but the other was so fair! * * The three cavaliers behind her were all of them occupied, each according to his nature. The tall one applauded outrageously, and cried '*Bravo!*' — the fat one profited by the noise his neighbour kept up, to murmur, in a low voice, into her ear some of those words which have too much meaning or not meaning enough, — the youth, absorbed in his silent contemplation, could not, in his seventh heaven, have told you who was with him. Of the three, the first was stupid, the second too clever, the third inexperienced,—he had therefore the advantage. * * *

"At last, Mademoiselle Taglioni had danced — with what exquisite elegance I need not tell you — the admirable last step of *La Sylphide*. The house rose like one person; hands, feet,

voices, and hearts were united in one general applause: not a single lady kept that night in her hand, or on her heart, the bouquet she wore. There was an avalanche of flowers at the feet of the enchantress in the twinkling of an eye. * * Madame de Melcy was perhaps the only one who had kept her modest bouquet in her *ceinture*, till, unluckily for himself, the youngest cavalier, till then motionless and dumb, — whether he was awakened by that universal enthusiasm, or whether he wished to show that he had seen the ballet, — suddenly began like the rest to make a noise and to applaud. Then the young beauty drew hastily her bouquet from her belt: once more aware of its odour, she detached between her lips the sprig of thyme, and then launched her precious nosegay at the feet of Taglioni. Hardly, however, was it on the stage ere she repented, and, turning to the gentlemen behind her with a pretty air of entreaty, 'Which of you,' said she, 'will bring me back my nosegay?'

"Bring back a nosegay out of such a mountain of flowers! When the three heard the

orders of their Empress, you should have seen the difference of their attitudes! The tall man answered, with a laugh, 'that it would be as easy to find a drop of water in the sea;' the stout one called the lady '*capricieuse*,' in an insinuating tone; as for the youth—he was gone, like one possessed, to hasten on the stage. The tall man gave the lady her shawl, the fat one his arm: I left my box to offer my adieus and last compliments to Mademoiselle Taglioni.

"In those days, one could get upon the stage of the Opera without an ivory ticket, if known to the door-keeper. There stood my youth, panting and impatient, besieging the door in vain. It opened for me and for him. The adorable Taglioni was still on the stage, in the midst of her pile of flowers; at once so happy and so sad, that she seemed to wish in the same instant to laugh and to cry. She gave us her two small hands while saying adieu, when on a sudden she drew back, startled by the sight of my young lover burying himself among her flowers, to recover the bouquet of his mistress. How should one be able to perform such a feat when

only eighteen? I explained, in a low voice, to Mademoiselle Taglioni what was the matter: she made a little flight backwards, as if to say, 'Search carefully.'

"When she had withdrawn, I found, with little difficulty, among the heap of camellias and roses, my charming little nosegay of field flowers. No wonder: I had seen Madame Prevost arrange it flower by flower; I had admired it all the evening on the white bosom of its wearer. It was the only one of its kind. I stooped and took possession of it. 'Sir,' I said to the unlucky young man, 'have you found the bouquet you were seeking?'

"'Alas! sir,' was his answer, 'I am out of my senses! I do not even know what I am seeking!' and was again beginning his hopeless quest; when over the stage poured a swarm of inferior *danseuses*, who were come to share the trophies of Taglioni. In another moment we were in the street together. 'Shall I come to your assistance to-morrow?' said I.

"He looked at me in astonishment, as if I

[illegible]

rooms filled slowly. The pretty widow was silent and thoughtful. He introduced me, and she was receiving me with languid indifference, when on a sudden her countenance became animated, and she smiled again.

"'You are late this evening, Arthur,' she said to the youth.—

"That day month they were married. He wore in his button-hole my sprig of thyme. 'Now that my talisman has taken effect,' said I, 'you must give it me back this evening.'

"'Give back what?' said Madame de Melcy.

"'My sprig of thyme,' said Arthur; 'it belongs to him, and he lent it me a month ago:' — and as he gave it back, he got up a sigh.

"'Pray,' said Madame, 'let him keep it.'

"'And what will you give me, Madame?'

"'Nothing for nothing,' was her answer, in a low voice, and she showed me (she had worn it on her bosom) the other half of the sprig of thyme, which she had kept. It was now quite dry.

"I went back to Madame Prevost, and told her my history.

"'Good,'—said she, 'I did not expect as much as this. And you have seen Madame de Melcy since?'

"'She is gone to her estate in Normandy,' was my answer.

"''Mid the thyme and the dew,'

sang Madame Prevost, gently.

"But, alas! she is no more:—so excellent, so indulgent, so intelligent from the heart!—she is gone; and there is no more poetry in the rose, nor scent in the violet; and flowers are again nothing better than things to wear and throw away. Who is there—now that she is dead—to make us a whole drama out of a sprig of thyme? And her book—what think you has become of it? She burned it herself, four and twenty hours before her death; watching with a tranquil eye the last spark of the fire which consumed so many ill-kept oaths, so many prayers so often heard, so many promises cast to the winds. With Madame Prevost are buried all the mysteries of the human heart she had discovered,—all that history of the world of Paris which I

should take good care not to disclose if even I had not passed my word to her."

That the real Madame Prevost was about as like the good faëry here represented as the stage shepherdess is to the real Mopsa, may be an ungracious thing to state at a moment when the reader, it is to be hoped, has been pleased by the elegant little romance in which she has figured.

But the cosmetic style which has made her what she seems is not without its influences. The power of making something out of nothing, — of building reveries, and histories, and sentiments upon facts or feelings one half imaginary, — is pernicious enough in its effects when brought to bear upon criticism by those who are earnest in their aims and purposes and deeply instructed in their subject, and who, in the fulness of their enthusiasm, make what is possible and what is impossible alike their ministers. But this is not exactly the case with the Bohemians of Paris, if all tales — if their own

tales — be true. Their brilliant sleight of hand, it is to be feared, is at the command of the highest bidder, and employed alike on what they understand and what they do not understand. We English do not dwell in an Elysium of Spartan incorruptibility; but there are few instances in our journalism (none, I would boldly say, among writers of common respectability) parallel to the case of the brilliant *feuilletonist* who has attacked in "Le ——" the identical person and principle that he was at the same time defending in "La ——;"—who will bestow some of his most exquisitely turned and sincere and convincing sentences publicly to entreat the fascinating Mademoiselle —— to devote her talents entirely to comedy, — while she has in her desk a private letter, no less exquisitely turned and sincere and convincing, to encourage her to an exclusive devotion to Melpomene. English morals — to speak without reserve — make it impossible to illustrate the strange traffic of opinions for favours which is a part of the trade, in all its ramifications. Suffice it to say, that the old *droits du seigneur*

hardly exacted more than the privileges which some of these graceful and delicate analysts of Drama and Music and Dancing have arrogated for themselves — and obtained. But the value they set upon their own expressed judgments, apart from the purchase of sensual indulgences, may be gathered from an occurrence which was related to me on authority not to be disputed, and which is not the only anecdote of the kind that could be told.

Once upon a time — I am not going to specify date, name, or journal — there appeared, in no obscure print, a violent attack upon L'Ecole Polytechnique. The attack was by M. ——, a well known and popular *matador* of the press; who, while he walks on the line which separates sense from nonsense, as often falls by accident into a poetical vein, as into the high bombastic fustian which befits a Tilburina or Whiskerandos.* M.——'s personality and abuse,

* As a specimen of the latter, I cannot withhold a passage from a *feuilleton* on the Romeo and Juliet Symphony by M. Berlioz. Of the *Scherzo* of Queen Mab,—" This is indeed faëry music," says the writer; " we could fancy we

then, was a thing not to be swallowed without a wry face by the school. The fiery young spirits rose *en masse* to resent the insult. A court martial was called. The journalist was to be dealt with. As the whole school could not go, however, six youths were selected by lot for this interesting service. To the house of the unlucky *feuilletonist* they marched — stern and civil — the last guests a knowing Scapin would care to turn loose upon his master. M. ——, accordingly, was "not at home." They *must* see him, however, they declared. When *could*

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hear the dew-drops falling into the urns of the flowers, where the little sylphs paint each other's noses with the yellow dust of the stamina. We are entirely transported into a world of fantasy. The toad shakes its silver bell; the spider with its long paws runs along the mullein leaves; the lazy elves unstring their necklaces of pearl, which they throw into the crystal lake — the fall tracing sonorous circles which spread wider and wider." Enough of M.——'s criticism: it is but another gloss upon the text furnished by his more distinguished brother artist, — the reader of Madame Prevost's book,—when, after writing in the most magniloquent phrases concerning the selfsame symphony, he said to a friend, "C'est charmant! charmant! — mais, enfin, je ne comprends rien de la musique!"

they see him? After ten minutes' parley and running backwards and forwards, Scapin found he had been mistaken,—was sorry to have kept them waiting; and, since no better could be, they were admitted to the presence of the great man of the press. One had need be sustained by a strong sense of duty, when confronting such a half-dozen as ranged themselves silently in the journalist's *appartement;* but M. —— had only a good face to put upon the matter, and, with many bows and smiles, begged to know what had procured him the distinguished honour of such a visit.

"You are M. ——?" said the spokesman.

M. —— has no particular respect for his name; but people dare only deny their identity in the third act of a comedy. "I am."

"And we are from L'Ecole Polytechnique."

Another deferential bow. "That, I am aware, gentlemen, by your dress. May I ask to what I am indebted for such a compliment?"

"It is soon told: we are here on simple business. You are the author of the article in 'Le ——,' concerning our establishment?"

There was no denying this. — It had been M.——'s painful duty; indeed, journalists were called upon to do violence to their feelings, in no respect more stringently than when compelled to acquaint the public with unpleasant truths.

"Truths!" echoed the spokesman. "M.——, you know, every one knows, that what you have said is a lie!"

"*Messieurs!*"

"A lie, M.——! and here is a note which we have written, contradicting your assertions. Sir, you will sign it, and print it as your own in your next paper. This is the object of our visit." And a note of the most unqualified and abject apology was "put in," as the law phrase runs.

M.—— was horror-struck. Afflicted as he was to have caused such a brave and honourable body of gentlemen the slightest uneasiness, they must feel that their anger was unreasonable. It was an impossibility — an outrage to his conscience. What he had written had cost him already — Heaven knows what it had not cost him! but his duty to the public had demanded the sacrifice.

"You will sign that paper," exclaimed the sestett, in a louder and more insolent tone.

"Impossible!" was the reply of M.——, with a more courteous bow.

"Then, sir," said the first spokesman, stepping forward, "but one course is left to us. You will give me satisfaction."

"My dear sir! — you must permit me — the thing is unheard of! — I have written from a sense of duty, and, as I have said, not to disturb any one; and, as to demanding satisfaction, I have not been insulted. It is a totally professional affair."

"Well, then," said the second of the band, advancing and filliping the dismayed *feuilletonist* on the face with his glove, "are you insulted now? Will you now sign that paper? or give M.—— satisfaction? Another '*No*,' and you shall be accountable to me as well as to him, — and so on. Here are six of us!"

"Really, gentlemen, any thing so unheard of, any thing so peremptory as this, I have never met with in the course of my arduous labours. The situation you place me in.....

the earnest wish I have not to disoblige.... and as the best of us are liable to deception....."

"In short, M. ——, you will sign the paper and publish it"..... And M.—— signed.

"Now, then," said the first speaker with a contemptuous smile, "we have attained our object. We do not wish to ruin you, M.——, knowing that you write for bread; and we cannot degrade you further. We will not insist upon your publishing this document, but shall keep it in the archives of L'Ecole as your own testimony to the value of your own word. Good morning, M. ——."

So much for the light infantry of Criticism in Paris! With a command of words so extensive, and a knowledge, not of principles merely, but even of terms, hanging so loosely about them, it is not wonderful that, to a large portion of their gayly sounding analyses, and picturesque rhapsodies, might be applied the Quaker's reproof to the soldier in the stage coach,—"Verily, friend, thy drum is a type of thee; it

soundeth by reason of its emptiness." It is not wonderful that they should feel most at home when their subject, by its remote vagueness, is one to embroider with glorious language, rather than to dissect with keen thought. Hence, the imaginative and obscure and gigantic works of M. Berlioz, before which deep theoretical musicians hesitate, as too *bizarre* and familiar, too strangely compounded of what is the tritest in melody and what is most daring in construction *, offer no difficulties to these confident and florid rhapsodists. But the influences which this gentleman's compositions and criticism exercise in Paris are at once too extraordinary

* I must not be understood here as presuming to offer an opinion of my own on these much-canvassed compositions. In spite of reiterated attempts, the opportunity has never fallen in my way which could justify me in describing the impressions I had received from them. They are here mentioned solely to illustrate the confidence with which the very works demanding the widest knowledge and the most passionless impartiality for their right appreciation are laid hold upon by those possessing little positive learning, and only "pretty words" (to borrow John Wesley's endorsement of some of the apologetic letters of that termagant, his wife) in place of clear ideas.

and too characteristic of the effect of Manners upon Music to be dismissed at the close of a chapter. In the mean while, to place the authority of the journalists in its true light, it is enough to say that were their powers of comprehension indeed raised to the poetical heights they fancy they occupy when admiring the works of M. Berlioz, they would not satirize the worthies of Art for the sake of any younger successor, — remembering that, however high their idol is enthroned, the topmost step of a staircase stands not self-balanced, save by miracle; and that their own creed and manner of life bind them to believe in no marvels, save such as are wrought by the charlatanry of a Robert Macaire!

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MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

FRANCE AND GERMANY.

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FRANCE AND GERMANY:

A

SERIES OF TRAVELLING SKETCHES

OF

Art and Society.

BY HENRY F. CHORLEY,

AUTHOR OF "CONTI," ETC. ETC.

"Praising all, is praising none." — *Burney.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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...nuence of the People rep

MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

FRANCE.

PARISIAN AUTHORITIES.

Dudevant! I *could not* have seen her! She never wore men's clothes. It was an absurd English calumny. Two years later I could have quoted the testimony of a friend of my own, who had stood beside her when, in a like attire, she watched the preparation of the convicts for the galleys in the court-yard of a French prison. I could have told how one of the most distinguished of her countrymen had described to me, with all his usual grace as a *raconteur*, a visit she had paid him—hat on head, coat on body, boots on feet, and staff in hand — on her route to take fraternal counsel with M. l'Abbé Lamennais. But, unfortified then, save by her own confessions, and the floating tales wandering about the world, and eager to escape from a flood of eloquence as rapid but not so amusing as Dejazet's, I could but bow to the better knowledge of my instructors; having not the slightest inclination to do battle in behalf of what they chose so vociferously to declare was a dream.

I have since been much amused by a German defender and enthusiast in behalf of this re-

markable authoress, who has contributed his experiences to the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. After declaring the object of his enthusiasm to be more womanly than many of the women of Paris who despise her, he proceeds to describe how she greeted M. Heine, the redoubtable author of the "Reisebilder," by passing her hand over (*Anglicé*, stroking) his hair; and how she challenged her Teutonic guest to a smoking-bout of paper cigars, which she had rolled up while the party were discussing strong questions — moral, theological, and philosophical.

By such partial observations as mine, and by such outrageous panegyrics as those of her defenders, who deny facts as established as the column in the Place Vendôme, one of the most remarkable writers and thinkers in modern Europe is alike wronged. The result of a lamentably distorted position can hardly fail, on the one side, to be a minute, perhaps an impertinent curiosity; on the other, an absurd and overstrained championship: here, misconception, wholesale abuse, and anathema; there, an apotheosis little more defensible than the deification

of the Goddess of Liberty as presented by some shapely *poissarde* in the days of Anarchy. How to attempt the slightest tracing of such a character, is a matter of much doubt and hesitation: yet the labour is worth the pains, because of the immoderate importance some are apt to assign to such influences as the writings of its object exercise; — because of the increasing disposition to examine and to canvass the principles of which, carried to their extremity, Madame Dudevant is the type; — and because, in the midst of much that is foul, and violent, and ignorant, and unjust, moulded by the will of Genius to take the semblance of what is fair, and serene, and wise, and all-seeing, there is a centre of sincerity worth looking at, wherever it can be ascertained to exist.

I have called Madame Dudevant's position lamentably distorted, since that which in England could but result from a terrible and unbridled proclivity to vicious indulgence, in France may have arisen in part from circumstances hard to overcome. The form which her energies have taken is but another illus-

tration of that state of society, of that unnatural, and (to the most latitudinarian eyes) ill-proportioned union of things religious with things sensual, of which "Robert le Diable" is the most vigorous operatic expression! At the time of the first Revolution, partly by the bitter wit of Philosophy, — partly by the shameless and wanton corruptions of Orthodoxy, cloaking its lusts and venalities and scepticisms under the hollow forms of decency, — Belief was utterly swept away. The nun and the priest, the Cardinal and the things of the altar, were dragged on to the stage to delight the grisly audiences reeking from the guillotine. The religious idea was gone: no one knew whither; — gone for ever, it might have been thought, if such a mathematical impossibility as doubt and eternity could co-exist. Napoleon, that deep searcher out of the springs of action by which men are moved — that unscrupulous employer of expedients, — endeavoured to revive it: but a church could no more be raised by his conscriptions, than the crown could be assured to his brow because a Pope placed it there! The

spells which insure conquest, and those which secure repose, belong to different schools of necromancy. The Bourbons, on their return, with a sincere and blind devotion, once again tried to reanimate the spirit of reverence: as if the old formalities and lip-services, so often prostituted to the worst uses in other times, could do any thing for a people which had become utterly hardened from indifference into licence. Yet the people was not wholly content to be without a religion. When another up-turning came — another shock of the first great earthquake — not, indeed, the last! — after the convulsion had in some measure subsided, it was seen that in the newest manifestations of popular genius and intellect in literature and in art there was a tampering with Tradition — a reference to the creeds and sainted things of by-past times. No repose: but some earnestness — a stretching-out of the hands hither and thither, as of those who would say, "What shall we now lay hold upon?" The authorities and the *cimelia* of the ancient church were no longer objects of mockery, but of curiosity. The

literature of Philosophy was admired for its brilliant interference betwixt a profligate, hypocritical court and a bloated religion, and an oppressed people, rather than because it contained those permanent truths and principles on which the mind of a great nation can rest, and from which it can proceed towards knowledge and happiness. "To meet the exigencies of such a period of transition, the Spirit of Unbelief and Revolution, aware that the court-ruffles and *calembourgs* of the courtier and wit were a mode gone by, in imitation of his betters adroitly snatched up a priestly garment and a laurel crown, and began to announce a Millennium, wherein the earthly desires and the heavenly aspirations of all should be together and for ever gratified. No wonder that from the ranks of a society so impressible by nature, so lawless by habit, so shaken by reiterated convulsions, — yet feeling the state of lawlessness and convulsion intolerable, — a train of ardent spirits should start up ready to follow Mephistopheles when masquerading as an apostle; too thankful to embrace a mimic

creed which required so little from its professors, save the assurance to themselves that they were believing. Among these was a being, endowed with a like impetuosity of bodily temperament and poetical genius, masculine self-will and female mobility; the eloquence of a De Stäel, without her didactic earnestness; the *besoin d'être aimée* of Ninon d'Enclos, without the prudent coquetries which enabled that enchantress so long to maintain her enchantments: audacious in availing herself of the excuses offered by a loveless home and an ill-assorted marriage, to cast every tie of sex and custom aside; credulous in abandoning her whole self of passion and aspiration to a herd of men, who were all the more triumphant to number her among their sullied crew because she was young — a poetess, and a woman! Such, in a few words, was the time — such the manner — of Madame Dudevant's appearance as an authoress." *

Whether these premises be true or not, it is past doubt that, in the midst of a career noto-

* British and Foreign Review, April, 1839.

riously reckless, corrupt, and insolent towards every form and custom of social morals, — in the midst of a life of garret-orgies, and smoking-bouts, and strange random journeys, reflected in the works of George Sand, — we come everywhere upon confessions of weariness and agony, amounting to the "Si je pouvais prier!" of the chivalric prodigal of the Sicilian legend. We discover a willingness to rest upon what is sublime in Nature, and what is beautiful in Art: we encounter indications of a consciousness that Faith and Poetry are not utterly extinct. These, it is true, by all who measure life and its fruits but by one insular standard, may be thought the mere posture-making of a courtesan who is trying, in default of fresher graces, "to mimic Clarissa to the very life;" whereas they are the struggles and the yearnings of a mind which, though it has gone down into the mire, is not wholly base and filthy enough to remain there.

The intense personality which distinguishes Woman, when it would fain avail itself of shrewd reason and solemn eloquence to reconcile things irreconcileable, is a spectacle as painful as it is

repulsive to witness. No trickery can make us believe that a code of corruption is a new gospel which will supersede the old evangele of moral purity. But, while we regard the struggle with deep sadness, let us not forget the toils in which the victim was entangled. Let us not forget that there were such days as those of the Regency; — that there was a hollow epoch of etiquette, when a Dauphiness of France could not amuse her private hours as she liked without the sanction of a Dubarry; — that the gold and carved work of Throne and Altar were undermined by a set of men whom Philosophy could not save from devouring personal vanity and selfish sycophancy, and pulled down by a set of brutes who cared for little save their own gross lusts and ambitions, while they talked of Equality. Let us remember that the despotic career of the only man who could rule a land so terribly devastated bad in itself the elements of destruction, and closed to be succeeded by an impotence worse than any disease. Let us remember that, under Regent, Republic, Emperor, and King, the old social usages have never been annulled: — the

institution of marriage, always considered as a heartless treaty, has gradually sunk to the lowest point of discredit: the old standard of Honour, nominally not pulled down, has been really moved hither and thither by the elastic shiftings of a jobbing spirit of expediency: — and shall we expect that, from a social chaos so wide, so deep, and so ancient, purity and beauty and order can spring, as by miracle, in the person of one who is no saint, but a self-willed and half-educated woman?

The devotion of such a being, in such a state of morals and manners, to Art, is not to be thought derogatory to the Spirit whose worship admits of such a ministry — but rather as exalting it to the dignity of one of those redeeming angels that withholds the soul from being utterly dragged down and swept away. While Birth could be only regarded by one in George Sand's position as

——— "a gossip's tale,
By blear-eyed nurses mumbled o'er the babe;
Scrawl'd on stale parchments — gilt on crumbling shields,
A dream — a phantom;" —

and Glory as a cruel and heartless splendour; and Faith enjoining moral observance as a crutch useful only to those who are feeble enough to be supported by it, — Art offers that very divinity, in the worship of which all the necessity for worshipping something may be gratified, without self-humiliation or superstitious reverence. Vague and poor as this is, it is better than the utter aimlessness of Doubt and Denial; the end of which is the ultimate dissolution of all Truth, and Beauty, and Virtue.

But while the influence of Music and Painting can hardly fail to produce gracious and ennobling effects on one so passionate and so world-weary, — leading the mind away from utter negation and discontent, and restoring to it those better emotions which soften, though they cannot purify, it is by no means so certain that the influence of natures and existences, in which all that is hateful and all that is love-worthy—"Beauty and ashes" — are so inextricably mixed, is beneficial to the health or well-being of Art. For when soundness and unsoundness are thus cruelly confounded, how shall the thinker come

at truth? His humility destroyed, and, with it, his power of learning, how shall he reach those immutable bases of precept and research which demand patient thoughts and calm lives? He will be too apt to torture Art to make it give up a meaning which his own disturbed mind requires: he will precipitate it into a lawlessness in harmony with his own life. At least, in the case of George Sand, — with the exception of a passage or two, such as the analysis of "Les Huguenots" I have translated, where a vivid and penetrating spirit seizes what may have been the *arrière-pensée* of the composer, and sets it before us with a rare force and clearness, — the whole of her poetical pages are given over to feelings rather than thoughts — to rhapsody rather than instruction—concerning Art. The balance and self-submission necessary for the thorough reception and firm hold of a subject so complex as Music, are wanting to her nature. I dare not say that the honest adoption of a creed would have made Madame Dudevant a critic of the rarest excellence; but I would declare boldly, that a disordered life, and a faith whose

moving principle is a feverish unrest — and which clings to all things because it will bind itself to none, —can but produce hectic judgment, and indiscriminating enthusiasm. It is not those who rule their own spirits who can least understand the fluctuations and vagaries of Genius. Because they are not carried away, they can contemplate all the more calmly.

Another example of enthusiasm called into action by revolution, and, in disgust of "creeds outworn," forcibly flinging itself into anarchy and disorder, is presented by the symphonist with whom the novelist is here coupled. In his art, M. Berlioz is as iconoclastic as George Sand in her intercourse with received things and ordinances. If it has been my disappointing fate never to hear a note of the music of M. Berlioz in Paris, it was my odd fortune to meet him for the first time in a place and a society as characteristic of his peculiar position, as a first sight of Gluck would have been if taken through the box-door of Madame St. Huberti — the fascinating *prima donna* of L'Académie Royale, who contrived to bring

about an amicable interview betwixt the composer of "Iphigenie" and his rival Piccini.

The critics' boxes at the Conservatoire are little larger than pill-boxes. To obtain a seat elsewhere, however, at one of those famed concerts was impossible; and it was with no common feelings of eagerness and anticipation that I repaired thither on a certain day in January, 1840. An old-fashioned dinner of four and twenty, round a table calculated to hold a baker's dozen (such as Hook would revel in describing dish by dish), or an old-fashioned journey in a six-inside coach, was hardly more of a squeeze than that couple of hours in the haunt of *MM. les Journalistes.* Fortunately, it was a bitter cold day;—had it been summer, the flare of the artificial lights hanging before my eyes, and the pressure from without of many beards, which seemed to sit over my shoulders, and in my pockets — here, there, and every where — would have made up a dear price to be paid for hearing even Beethoven's symphonies performed by the *soi-disant* most perfect orchestra in Europe. In such a masquerade of Orsons,

a smooth face is at a premium; and the one which in its smoothness paired off with mine was thoughtful and shrewd-looking, with eyes at once deep and keen, and a certain sad and sardonic expression, the coming and going of which had engaged me some time before I knew that it belonged to M. Berlioz. He was sitting, almost pressed out of his hard and scanty chair, by another of the fraternity. This was M. Mainzer.* Only in Paris could such a

* Polemics apart, M. Mainzer's musical criticisms have a depth and soundness which are excellent. His knowledge, too, of the elder schools of Music is extensive. He deserves, too, did space permit, to figure among Authorities of Paris, for the care and pains bestowed by him on an attempt at establishing schools for the working classes. This was carried out with a devotion and industry worthy of all praise: and one of the most agreeable evenings recorded in my Parisian journals of 1837 is the one I passed in his school-room, at the Place de l'Estrapade, where a large concourse of the street-public of Paris was singing part-songs most lustily and in good tune. I believe M. Mainzer's establishments have subsequently languished, partly from the interruption caused by the production of his opera, and partly from the superior share of public patronage and interest having fallen to the schools conducted on M. Wilhem's plan. Of these I have something to say in a coming chapter.

juxtaposition have presented itself! M. Mainzer (like Goldsmith's Dr. Rock) had but recently published a book to prove that the genius of M. Berlioz was but quackery, and his picture-music a monstrous combination of what was with what ought to have been impossible: and M. Berlioz (like Goldsmith's Dr. Franks) had only very recently retaliated, by laconically characterising M. Mainzer's "La Jacquerie," produced at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, as "the opera in the key of D!" There, in short, sate the romantic critic in all his formidable glory; and there sate the affronted upholder of classicism, more hurt by that one *mot*, than his antagonist had been damaged by his whole artillery of ninety-five pages. The situation seemed comical enough to an Englishman, used only to a state of literary intercourse in which, when bitter tongue and sharp pen may have fullest way, the anonymous is too often snatched up more expediently than honourably. Of the music of M. Berlioz I have no pretension to speak. Angry musicians tell me it is an *olla*,

without design or order, and the pompous announcement of its leading ideas not borne out by their own intrinsic values, still less by a single passage of construction. The more tolerant give it credit for grand orchestral effects, produced by a novel admixture of the instruments. On the other hand, the George Sands and Janins — the enthusiasts and the *feuilletonists* — rave about it as something too delicious for the uninitiated to enjoy; and dwell upon its very deformities with the same fond rapture as made sundry Wordsworthians select, as gems of that admirable poet's genius, the puerilities and crotchets which only youthful obstinacy, quickened by persecution and resolute to abide by a forced theory, could have originated or suffered to remain. Truth, of course, lies between the abuse and the apotheosis. Ten years of constant and persevering energy have given M. Berlioz a certain stability in Paris which it were nonsense to deny, and would be impossible to destroy. Whether ten years of more humble advancement along the beaten highways of Music would not

have conducted him further, even towards the originality which he has so incessantly agonised himself to reach, admits of some question.

Right or wrong, however, M. Berlioz is a type of Young France in his career and his criticisms — remarkable and worthy of study. Born in 1803, and destined by his father for the legal profession, he was early vexed by a passion for the art, which seems to have been strangely alimented. His Gluck idolatry, for instance, he tells us, was kindled by an arrangement, with guitar accompaniment (!), of some of that music which demands, if ever music did, scenic action and orchestral splendour. At an early period, he flung himself eagerly into the never-ceasing conflict between the old and the young schools—betwixt caution and self-will; and when he was about twenty, totally devoid of any positive knowledge of the art he was resolved to take by force, — on his resources being stopped by his father, he hazarded the manful step of engaging himself as a chorister at the Théâtre du Gymnase! Resolution and defiance seem to have gone together hand in hand through-

out his career. A musician he would be — but in his own way. He would submit to no learning of chords, and scales, and the movement of parts — to no step-by-step mastery of the nomenclature of a progressive and complicated science. Vague ideas of the grandeur of Gluck and Beethoven, — vague resolutions to start where they left off — to dispense with the forms he would never trouble himself by learning how to follow, — seem to have been his ruling principles. With all this, he made a certain progress. Having, in 1828, wrung from the Institute a second prize for composition, by a scene from "Sardanapalus," — which, in spite of its author's flagrant notions of revolution, must, in some measure, have *conformed*, to win for him any authentication on the part of so learned a body,—he was enabled, as a government scholar, to make a journey to Italy. But Italy contained nothing he cared to learn! and Germany, where "his bond," too, engaged him to pass a certain time, he disdained even to enter. French to the very heart — an upholder of romanticism in its wildest excesses — he re-

turned; sate down in the city of his election; and, partly criticising, partly composing—here venting a flood of vitriolic sarcasm, or a flight of high-toned poetry—there elaborating a march or a *scherzo*, which at least, by its strangeness, set all the world a-quarrelling;—by wielding now the pen, now the baton;—always peremptory, always egotistical; often presumptuous, often violent,—with a certain wild and chivalrous elevation of mind, and devotion to Art, to which a stormy and difficult career has borne testimony,—he has at last written and composed himself into a place of honour and regard at Paris; the singular result of indomitable self-will and unity of purpose.

Such a story is not without its attraction for all who love to see perseverance and resolution triumph. But the vagaries and inconsistencies into which such a career may lead, and in his case seem to have led, are so striking and dangerous as to make one wish that the church founded on its success should be a small one, and, as at present, confined to the talkers about,

rather than the participators in, Art. The series of M. Berlioz' criticisms, if read carefully, would puzzle any poor student past cure. He hates particular rhythms, and particular movements, under particular moons; he hates all melody when it is wrought out; and yet deifies Beethoven, who was universal, and whose magnificently copious works prove that he hated nothing. Gluck is set up as the only one prophet; Handel, Gluck's nearest co-mate in music, sneered at as a mechanist always formal, oftentimes frivolous. Passages of sarcastic acumen, sharpened by personal feeling, as in the case of the calculation of the gains of Duprez which has been given, are oddly mixed up with citations from Shakspeare, Oriental apostrophes, and epigrams which turn the thought entirely away from the primary object to the secondary influence. In short, viewed from a distance, M. Berlioz is a musician among the wits and rhapsodists, a wit and rhapsodist among the musicians: with all his audacity and energy and persistence, his poetry of pen and his grasp of aspiration, a

self-reproving anomaly, unless Chaos is to come again, and the *disjecta membra* of the quarry, or the heap of stones shaken down from some ruined temple, are to pass into a higher esteem than the perfect statue and complete shrine, in which Art has perpetuated beautiful thoughts by the agency of Truth and Science.

CHAP. III.

M. LISZT.

The Style of Music in Paris influenced by Rubini, Paganini, Berlioz, and Liszt. — M. Liszt as a Critic. — PAGANINI: ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEATH. By M. Liszt. — The Writer's Precepts borne out by his Practice. — The Influences of his early Career. — His Characteristics as a Pianist. — The Theory of Contrasts. — M. Liszt's Performance of Beethoven. — His Feeling for National Music. — What next?

How far the state of society and of opinion — the constant interference and influence in Art of a half-instructed class of intelligent minds — has led to a constant research for what is strange and remote, and is calculated to excite rather than to impress or instruct, the French instrumentalists as a body display, I think, in characters which those who run may read. It is a life of fever that they lead; it is a constant aspiration after the impossible and far-fetched which torments them: and they choose for them-

selves guides and leaders calculated to stimulate them to effects rather than to encourage them in principles. Rubini, whose destroyed voice has led to the most meretricious exhibition of pathos, in long-drawn tremblings and sudden alternations of tone, — Bellini, whose broad and sickly melodies could but be rendered expressive by an exaggeration of style, — have leavened their manner of performance more than they are aware; while the vague and picturesque praises of Janin and Sand, and the united theory and practice of M. Berlioz, have conspired to lead them away from the old forms of composition, and to engage their heated fancies upon elegies, hymns, serenades, convent-prayers, witch-scenes, fishermen's songs, and such picturesquely-christened caprices, where the name (*sub rosâ* be it said) is oftentimes the most characteristic feature of the work.

As belonging to this class, though "better than his class" — as an authority and celebrity among other authorities and celebrities — there is an artist who must be mentioned here. Though Hungarian by birth, and Parisian only

by adoption, M. Liszt illustrates in himself the criticism, the pianism, and the romanticism of the new schools. The real diamond among much that is paste — the *real* instrumentalist, and wit, and thinker, among many charlatans — he has influenced the musical mind of Young France more than that particularly independent body the artists of Paris would possibly admit if called upon to acknowledge their kings and rulers: and this not merely by his playing, but by sportings of the pen, and words dropped in passing visits. As he here follows other writers on Music, specimens of whose craft have already been given, we will see which way *his* critical biases tend. It might have been thought that the triumphs of Paganini as an artist, and his characteristics as a man, were a subject as exhausted as the Rose for poets, or the Scott novels for table-talk. Yet, there is something in the following fragments, hastily thrown off by him in *La Gazette Musicale*, of deeper import than I have found in any other *éloge*, or technical enumeration of the wonders wrought by the Violin-King.

Paganini.

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEATH.

"Paganini is dead. With him is extinct one of those powerful existences which Nature seems to make haste to recall to herself. With him has disappeared a phenomenon unique in the sphere of Art. * * * * When he came forth in his fortieth year from his retreat, with a talent matured to all the perfection of which it was susceptible, his apparition wore in some degree a supernatural aspect. So vivid was the sensation he produced — to such a point did he strike all imaginations — that to stop at the reality was impossible. We saw all the legends of sorcery and magic of the Middle Ages revived on his behalf; the marvels of his talent were extended to the events of his life: — it was attempted to explain his inexplicable genius by facts still more inexplicable. The world did all but believe that he had sold his soul to a demon; or, at least, that having strangled his wife, he had made of one of her sinews that fourth string, upon which he played his most

enchanting melodies. He traversed Europe, drawing round him an enthusiastic throng, who cast gold at his feet, and gave his name as the most precious recompence to those artists who distinguished themselves on other instruments. Since then, we have seen Paganinis of the piano, of the violoncello, of the guitar. The violinists agonised themselves to discover his secrets; they studied with the sweat of their brows the difficulties which he had created in sport; and the public, taking pity on their efforts, did not even honour them by proclaiming their inferiority. Thus — a rare fortune — the pride of Paganini, if pride he had, breathed on inaccessible heights. He was not troubled by any injustice, he was not disquieted by any indifference: he descended to his tomb without having met a passing shade of the importunate heir to his glory.

"Could we have believed it, had we not witnessed it? This artist, borne in triumph, exalted above humanity; — this talent, to which the people gave so liberally that which it often refuses to the greatest of mankind — riches and fame; — this man, who excited such tran-

sports, passed through the crowd without mingling with it. No one knew the emotions with which his heart beat; he had with no one of his kind a community of thought or sentiment; he appeared a stranger to every sympathy — a stranger to every passion — a stranger even to his own genius: for Genius is the power of revealing God to the human soul; and Paganini had no other divinity save a gloomy and ill-humoured personality.

"It is with regret that I utter severe words like these. I know, too, that he is as unwelcome who blames the dead, as he who praises the living; and that, under pretence of a respect for the tomb, the lie of the apotheosis ought, in the judgment pronounced on any individual, to follow the lie of defamation. I know, also, that some deeds of beneficence could be cited which would seem to disprove this accusation. But what are scattered actions to the whole tissue of a life? It is no more possible for a man to be consequent in evil, than it is given him to be consistent in what is good. And I ask — taking the word *egoism*

not in its limited meaning, but in a sense more extended, and applying it to the artist yet more than to the man — have we not cause to say that the starting-point as well as the goal of Paganini was one and the same narrow egotism?

"However this might be, peace to his memory! He was great, and greatness carries with it its absolution. We know not at what price greatness is given to men. But will the void he left behind him be soon filled up? — Are the essential and accidental causes of his sovereignty of a nature to be reproduced? — Will the artistic royalty which he conquered pass into other hands? — Can there be another Artist-King?

"I do not hesitate to declare that an apparition similar to that of Paganini runs small chance of being again seen. The singular combination of a colossal talent with every circumstance most calculated to surround it with *prestige* will remain an insulated fact in the history of Art. Another, who to-day would attempt to enthral men's minds by voluntarily enveloping his life, like Paganini, in mystery, — tracing

round himself a circle of adamant,—would surprise no one. Supposing him to be possessed of talent beyond all price, the remembrance of Paganini would be always there, to accuse him of charlatanism and plagiary. The public, too, expects something else of the artist it would adopt; and it is only by a path diametrically opposite that he can attain an equal glory — a superior power.

"To regard his art, not as a prompt means of conduct towards selfish enjoyments and a sterile celebrity, but as a sympathetic power, which brings together and unites men; to elevate his life to the high dignity of which talent is the ideal; to make artists comprehend what they could and what they ought to be; to rule opinion by the ascendancy of a noble life; to awaken and maintain in the soul *that enthusiasm for the Beautiful which is so near a passion for the Good;* — such is the task which any artist should impose upon himself who is strong enough to aspire to the heritage of Paganini.

"This task is difficult, but not impossible. Wide are the paths opened to-day to every am-

bition: sympathy and comprehension certainly await every man who makes his art serve a conviction or a sentiment. Every one is at work to bring on new destinies for society. Without exaggerating the importance of the artist in the work of social transformation — without proclaiming in pompous terms (as has perhaps been too much done) his mission and his apostleship—let us believe that his place, too, is marked in the edicts of Providence, and that he too has a share to contribute to a work durable, because sound. Let the artist, then, henceforward renounce, with all his heart, that selfish and vain character of which Paganini was, we believe, a last illustrious example; — let him propose an aim for his exertions, not in himself, but beyond himself; —let his powers and acquirements be a means, not an end; —let him, above all, remember that, like Nobility, — nay, yet more than Nobility, — GENIUS BESTOWS."

How far M. Liszt has suited his life to his theory, his friends and brother musicians know

full well. His unsparing prodigality of his talent in private society is little less remarkable than the munificence with which he has applied the fruits of its public exhibitions to do honour to departed genius (as in the case of his superb completion of the Beethoven monument), or to serve the purposes of charity.

It is the elevation of mind and the shrewdness of perception evidenced, however slightly, in the above fragment, which have made M. Liszt, as an artist, what he is, — in spite of the drawbacks which the childhood of a prodigy and a youth of strange and ceaseless adventure would seem calculated to throw in the way of his attaining the brilliant excellence he has attained. He, indeed, must be gifted with no common measure of loftiness and nerve of spirit who can come out from the destructive hot-bed of precocious success a man — who can pass through the brilliant and disorderly and exciting life of Young Paris without becoming either utterly *blasé* or brutified, or forced into a mould of conventional picturesqueness as unmeaning and as wearisome as the masquerade of beard and

moustache which are to be met alike in the guard-room and the ribbon-shop. But while, musically, M. Liszt has been looked up to, more than they are aware, as a model and a monarch, by the young artists of France, his Parisian sojourn has left its traces upon him. He is too good and profound a musician not to have been of unspeakable use to his contemporaries by revealing to them — though by a light, as it were, which *scorches* — the treasury of rich thoughts and noble conceptions of the great masters of Music. But he has not lived with some of the most brilliant talkers and daring thinkers of his day, in whom brilliancy sometimes overpasses the bounds of scruple, and Thought sometimes escapes loose of all Reason, — not been conversant with the Byron worshippers and the Hoffmann students, with the Pantheistic religionists and the new society-mongers of the French metropolis, — without a vein of natural singularity being encouraged and cherished, so as sometimes to take the forms of contradiction and defiance, which, had his nonage been spent in a calmer hemisphere, might have gradually re-

ceded from sight, or been so trained as to take the direction of the Beautiful in place of the *bizarre*.

It is impossible (familiarly to speak) to take hold of the Public by its button, in the first moment of its pleasure or displeasure, and there and then to trace out the progress of a life and the series of early associations, so as to engage its patience in judging of something utterly strange and rare. But M. Liszt, as an artist, is too unique a phenomenon not to deserve a far more deliberate study than, in England, we have been willing to give his excellences and peculiarities. For not only must the most limited among the purists confess his prodigious mastery over his instrument* — a thing totally

* Let me attempt to enumerate a few of the mechanical peculiarities of M. Liszt's playing. In uniform richness and sweetness of tone he may have been surpassed. His manner of treating the piano—his total indifference to its wood and wire, in his search for effect — could hardly fail to preclude that uniform care and finish, and resolution to please by every touch, which has charmed the world so deservedly in certain contemporary pianists. There is something, too, as regards physical confirmation of hand, which may have been more genially bestowed on others than M. Liszt. But his varieties of tone are re-

distinct from that creative genius which produces melody as the birds do their trills, or the

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markable; and, as far as I have gone, unexampled. Sometimes, as, for instance, in Schubert's Serenade, or Chopin's Mazurkas, or Moscheles' study in G., Number 3., Book I., he makes the strings whisper with an aërial delicacy, or utter voices clear and tiny as the very finest harp notes. Sometimes, as in the trio to his "Marche Hongroise," the thing (to quote Wordsworth) "becomes a trumpet;" and a sound is extorted from the unwilling strings—for Rumour declares that piano-fortes find themselves heavily punished by such a novel method of intercourse — as piercing and nasal as the tone of a clarion. He makes use, too, of a double-bass stop which is his own entirely; and gives that effect of the softened and all-confounding roll of the drum which composers know to be so mysterious and profitable in incantation scenes. The last of these *changes*—as the old harpsichord writers used to call *variations*—is the strangest, but also the least agreeable.

With regard to the amount of difficulties vanquished, those who have least comprehended M. Liszt's mind have perhaps been the most wonder-stricken by his attributes. Rapidity and evenness of finger, consistent with the most self-controlling power of stopping or retarding a passage to introduce some freak of ornament, to improvise some *shade* of expression — grasp over intervals the most harassing and distant (the bass-chords of many of his arrangements extending over two octaves, and yet struck so certainly as almost to lose the effect of the *arpeggio* necessary to

brooks their sweet laughter; — M. Liszt's manner is not to be thoroughly understood, for better for worse, save by those who are familiar with the newer schools of European imagination. These must be willing to regard him, not merely as the technical successor of Clementi, and Hummel, and Moscheles, but as one in whom the piano, so far from being the end, is but the means of expressing certain emotions. The school in which M. Liszt has been trained — the literary and artistic associ-

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their production);—the power of interweaving the richest and most fantastic accompaniments with a steadily moving yet expressive melody (let me instance a *trill* passage in the "Lucia" fantasia),— the maintenance of question and answer among the several parts into which the pianists now love to divide their passages as well as their *cantilenas*: — add to these a rare variety; a control over all the *intention*, the coquetry, or the pathos, that a mind quick as lightning in its motions can throw into the least suggestive chains of notes; — add to these velocity, fire, and poignancy in flights of octaves and in chromatic successions of chords: — All these gifts, singly or in combination, are sternly or gamesomely under command of the moment's whim — or, to call it by its right name, the moment's poetical imagining.

ations which he has embraced so eagerly — encourage violent contrasts. Passion, according to its canons, must be allowed free way, a momentary distortion being better than a chilling restraint. Beauty must be exhibited, not in a perpetual flow of harmony,—not the Venus bejewelled and crowned and attended by her Graces, moving only to take new forms of "pomp and pleasure," but foiled by rude and menacing shapes: — with a brawny and tempestuous Mars, as it were, at her side; nay, or even a fearful and misshapen dwarf, allowed to turn his face towards us, that the shudder with which we regard it may send us back to hers with a more exquisite relish. Thus it is with Victor Hugo in his dramas, and with the Dorvals and Lemaitres of the newer French stage in their personations: thus it is with George Sand in her novels. The hoop and the *perruque* vanished long since; after them the philosophers, who sneered at every truth save those wrapt up in remote classic fable; and French Art is revelling in her disenthralment with a boundless audacity which sanctions all experiments and justifies all

outbreaks, — instinct the while with such renewed life and youth and purpose as promise for the Future glorious if not perennial legacies.

But though M. Liszt has been led in some sort to join himself to the class of which we are speaking, by training, by constitution, — and by the applause of those who injudiciously regard extravagances in Art as the true metal, not the *scoria* cast up by it in the haste of its eruption, — it must still be insisted that the amount of his exuberances has been foolishly magnified. The people of England *will* have wonders. When they were tired of believing that Paganini could play upon one string, some of them were willing to believe him capable of playing without strings *at all!* (this is no supposition, but a reality.) Many who have heard M. Liszt only once have been misled through the eye by the singularity of his appearance; and, prepared for what is unusual, on the strength of some sudden outbreak of Fantasy, have set him down at once and for ever as crazed. Because he brings a superabundance of fire and passion to the reading of works fiery and passionate, as

the first movement of Weber's Concert Stück, or Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata, — illustrating their beauties (as Kean did Shakspeare's) with only too much force and vivacity, — they have forgotten the delicious calmness the artist could throw over music of a more tranquil character. Let me instance his playing of the *andante* of the same Sonata; or of Schubert's "Serenade," where Repose takes the colour of human emotion, lulled by the delicious influences of skies, and stars, and night-dews; or, again, of Schubert's "Ave Maria," where every note speaks the resignation of Prayer! If, in the strength of the light thrown upon familiar objects by a genius strong, original, and enthusiastic, some detached fragments *glare* so as to annoy the sense; — is it nothing, on the other hand, to have dark places illuminated, and details brought to day, the form and significance of which have heretofore been lost in the shadow? One more characteristic of M. Liszt, which connects him with other domains of Art than his own, remains to be spoken of: his strong feeling for all music that is peculiar by its nationality, — for the joyous

whirl of the Tarantella, or the floating grace of the Waltz, or the stately parade of the Polonaise, or the quaint measure of the Mazurka. If a week of his playing would give us a leaf out of every composer's book, from Handel down to Herz, from Cramer to Chopin, from Mondonville to Moscheles, it would also give us many leaves from his own journals; and tell us how he listened to the Swiss hill-echoes,—or dreamed away an evening among the lagoons at Venice,—or stood at the inn-door, and looked through its rude arch of blackened timber, while the *volksfest* of the Tyroler or Styrian was going on merrily within,—or assisted at a stately pageant given in his own capital of Pesth; possibly to honour some native artist, welcomed home with orations and plaudits which to us *sensible* English seem like things in faëry tales! M. Liszt's chief strength in composition has hitherto shown itself in the exquisite and appropriate settings he has given to the scraps of wild music he has gathered in such a pilgrimage as this.

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by many gentlemen and ladies of condition as to political and private events. Possibly some notion concerning the future destinies of Manners and Music in France may disclose itself, by implication, in other passages from my journals.

CHAP. IV.

THE CONSERVATOIRE.

The touchy point of the Parisian *Dilettanti*. — Anticipations of the Conservatoire. — News touching Handel, Sir Smart, and the Duke of ——, heard there. — Shabbiness of the Concert-room. — Dates of the Progress of the Conservatoire. — French Deficiency in Instrumental Composition. — M. Habeneck's Direction. — The Music I heard. — The Orchestra and that of our Philharmonic Concerts compared. — French Readings of Beethoven. — French Rage for Beethoven. — M. Butta's *Mutinée*. — The Audience of the Conservatoire. — French Appreciation of Beethoven illustrated. — An Anecdote told to the wrong Person. — The Vocal Music of the Conservatoire. — Gluck, Rameau. — Conclusion.

THE Parisian *dilettanti*, as far as I have been able to observe, though ever ready for controversy, have only one very touchy point. If you cannot relish Mademoiselle Rachel, it is ascribed to a *sentiment* for Mademoiselle Mars; and a loophole is made for your escape from indignation, by the sympathy which the French have always been willing to extend to passions

for old women. If you do not like Duprez, you are excused on the plea of supposed regrets for Nourrit. You may balance between Liszt and Thalberg, and still be regarded as a person who has a right to an opinion. You may extol the delicate and dreamy Chopin as superior to either; and it will rather serve you than otherwise, as earning for you the covetable reputation of one whose taste leads him to the gem rather than to the bas-relief — to what is choicest, and only appreciable by the few, in Art. You may even prefer Kalkbrenner, and a civil shrug of the shoulders is all the visitation your peculiar taste will encounter. As to the Italian singers, they are matters of fair dispute; and so long as you do not assert that Rubini is *quite* inaudible, you will be let alone, — or, at the severest, be let down by being quietly assured that "they never sing fit to be heard in London." But you had as wisely deny that France is France, — its cooks the only cooks — its gloves the only gloves — its women the only women worth a second word — in the world; as that the Conservatoire is a paradise of such

[illegible]

the Barrière de St. Denis, with the muddiest roads, the worst cattle, and — no offence to MM. Lafitte, Caillard, and Co. — the laziest diligence in all France. It was my first wish; and I think I do not even look forward to the first glimpse of Venice, or the first chord of the "Miserere" in the Sistine Chapel, with a greater eagerness than I did to the hour which should make me partaker in a pleasure described to me by Frenchmen — nay, and by Germans, who love not the French — as unique.

How my wishes were seconded by kind and friendly assistance, is only an affair of my own gratitude; and let it be here expressed sincerely. How I sate hemmed in betwixt two critical fires — betwixt, as it were, Iconoclasm and Tradition personified — the reader has already been told; also concerning the multitude of beards round about me; and what one of their owners said touching M. Veron's decorations, and the success of "La Juive." I would not be thought an eaves-dropper; but I cannot help mentioning that, on my second experiment in compressing myself within the

least practicable space at the Conservatoire, I heard some facts regarding English music, too wonderful to escape being journalised. Among others, that Handel's choruses form part of our weekly church service! The same authority, by the way, described our Antient and Philharmonic Concerts with a bewilderment so delicious as to confound entirely the functions of "*Sir* Smart" and that cheerful and benevolent personage, H. R. H. —— who, while patronising Music, listens, as —— phrases it, "at the top of his lungs." But there is no need to travel to the Rue Bergère to learn the limits of human invention, for any one who has been present (as I have been) when the paternity of an anonymous poem was admitted by a party to whom it was flatteringly ascribed,—the real owner sitting by the while.

The room where the Conservatoire holds its concerts is the *ne plus ultra* of shabbiness for a metropolis, our own dreary Opera concert-room not forgotten. Artificially lighted by day-time, small and filthy, airless and uncomfortable, I have heard it gravely said that its

discomfort and its limited size tend to keep up the concerts. Were the *salle* larger, every one could subscribe who wished; until, some fine day, perhaps, the room might be found too ample: on the converse of Sir Walter Scott's theory, that whatever is common is precious. There is a conscious martyrdom, moreover, to all Womenkind, in an arena so thoroughly destructive of their graces and toilettes, that may tend to support them in their devotion to the severe schools of Music. These considerations are not mine. As far as I am able to judge, a sound and classical taste exists among French ladies, requiring no such explanation as this to be given for their constant presence in the *Salle Bergère.* They belong to the critics' box, and were part of an answer made by one of the fraternity to another, who was apologising for the dreary and barn-like aspect of the concert room — *at* the strange Englishman.

Had good taste or good policy permitted me to discuss French institutions as freely as English ones were discussed for my benefit, I might, in reply, have shown how the Conserva-

toire was distinguished from our model instrumental concert — the Philharmonic Society — as much by official patronage as by its superior system of organisation, which admits of no nightly change of conductors. Faint and far-off were the beginnings of the institution; and not auspicious as far as instrumental proficiency is concerned. For though Le Grand Monarque, besides dancing in the grand ballets which prefigured the present splendours of L'Académie Royale, promised, as it were, his people their Conservatoire, by himself being a guitarist and the royal proprietor of a band of four and twenty violins, with Lulli at their head, he left but a school of tyros to his successors. "When the sonatas of Corelli," says Corette, in the preface to his 'Method of Accompaniment,' "arrived from Rome towards the year 1715"— that is, at a period when Germany and England had already their men of renown — "no one could execute them. The Duke of Orleans, then Regent, and a great amateur of music, being desirous to hear them, was obliged to cause them to be sung by three voices. The violinists

began to study them, and, at the end of three years' time, three were found who were able to play them. One of these, Baptiste, absolutely went to Rome to study them under Corelli."

Yet, though Royalty thus did its part in fostering a school of violinism, it was under revolutionary auspices that the instrumentalists of Paris were united into the national plalanx which now chooses to challenge Europe. At first the Conservatoire was a mere school. "Forty-five musicians," says M. Lafage in his Manuel, "formed, in 1789, the nucleus of the music of *La Garde Nationale* of Paris. This was increased in 1790 to the number of seventy-eight, the municipal body contributing to its maintenance, and requiring its services on the occasion of all national fêtes and celebrations. In 1792 the National Guard was suppressed; and the Municipality had no more money to bestow on its musicians: but M. Sarrette, — who had always exerted himself in their behalf, seeing in the destruction of the cathedral choral schools the probable extinction of all means of musical instruction, — solicited, in the name

of the artists of Paris, from the Municipality of Paris, the establishment of a national school of Music." This was granted: and but for this, says the same authority, many distinguished artists would have quitted their country. The charter, however, was not definitively drawn out, nor the name fixed upon till the year 1795. By this charter, provision was to be made for the instruction of six hundred pupils, chosen from all the departments. In 1802, however, the expenses were found intolerably high: the Conservatoire was reduced — and the cathedral schools, by way of compensation, re-established. A new charter, passed in 1808, associated dramatic with musical study — founding a school of declamation, as well as of vocal and instrumental instruction. To this end, a minute and comprehensive *règlement* was drawn out. In 1814, however, it was again found necessary to remodel the establishment, which, after languishing during the Hundred Days, was suppressed on the restoration of the Bourbons. But the fruits of this suppression were disastrous, — there were no choristers nor orchestral players

for the theatres forthcoming when wanted; and the end was, that in 1822 M. Cherubini was commissioned to direct a new establishment. This for a while was more eminently vocal than instrumental. It was not till the successes of M. Choron, as director of a school of singers, piqued the instrumentalists into activity, that the old *exercises* of the classes of the pupils were replaced by those admirable and brilliant meetings in which the orchestral players have ended not by turning so much as absolutely overthrowing the tables on the choralists, — constituting themselves the main attraction, and rendering the vocal portion of the concert entirely subordinate.

In thus dating the progress of the Conservatoire to its present perfection as an executive body, it is not to be overlooked, that, with all their zeal, there have never been any signs among the French of the foundation of a school of national orchestral composition. This, indeed, if the reasonings of the foregoing chapters be true, may be said to demand — if not such settled times as France has hardly known for

the last half century — such settled minds as the nature of French society was not calculated to encourage. The same physical aptitude which makes dancing so eminently delightful to every thing with Gallic blood in its veins, and which gives a neatness of shape and a lightness of structure to so many a work, totally beyond the reach of the heavy-handed English manufacturer, — was sure to tend to the production of good instrumentalists. But it by no means assured the possession of that poetical enthusiasm, balanced by sound and ancient science — that sufficiency of fantasy and sufficiency of judgment united — necessary to combine ingredients of melody and harmony, for the production of such masterpieces as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven have left. And accordingly we have seen, that, in trying to found a school of their own, they are with all their might striving to dispense with attributes so sparingly possessed, and endeavouring — in place of the antique Couperins *, &c., who

* M. Fétis enumerates ten members of this family, ranging between the years 1630 and 1815, who were all

employed science without fancy — to make Fancy dispense with Science! Thus, then, as the French have few symphonies and overtures which can possibly claim admission into their model concert, the Conservatoire is thrown upon the stores of German classical music. During my visit to Paris, I heard executed there the Symphony of Beethoven in B flat, and the more fanciful one in A major; his overture to Leonora," and the thoughtful and picturesque overture which Moscheles has written to "Joan of Arc."

The orchestra, be it remembered, is always under one and the same direction. M. Habeneck has not, like our Philharmonic conductors, to give up his baton (I beg pardon, his violin bow), after his concert is over, to M.

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distinguished musicians — most of them organists. They seem to have received by heritage the organ of St. Gervais. It is to the compositions of Couperin *le Grand* (born in 1668, and who died in 1733), and his school of pupils, that I refer, in venturing to take them as a type of old French instrumental music. I know few of them; but the dryness of these is so eminent as, I think, to warrant the above judgment.

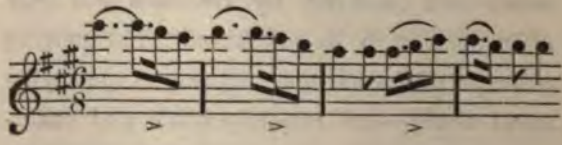
somebody else, who, for illustration's sake, may be as spirited as he is phlegmatic, or as phlegmatic as he is spirited. The ordering of the band is his alone, and you may see the phalanx of bows plying up and down on the strings with a mechanical consent and parallelism which in England can only be observed in those *fantoccini* orchestras that, under a monkey or a pair of white mice, borne by some black-eyed lank-haired Savoyard, loiter along those quiet streets where unfortunate literary men live. Nor is this a solitary and disproportionate excellence. The group of wind-instruments, too, at the Conservatoire has a like unity and coherence, — a like family resemblance among its separate members, — a like sensitive delicacy which is beyond all praise. No unfortunate flute there chirps half a note before its time, — no plethoric bassoon drops one of its thick Satyr-like tones in the midst of a pause, — no horn totters on the edge of coarse and mail-coach falseness when the tug of difficulty comes! All this results from training, since our own Philharmonic wind-instrumentalists could hardly severally have been more distinguished than

they *were*. Yet who ever heard eight of their meetings go over, and was not vexed by some such gratuitous exhibition, — some such flaw in the perfect symmetry of the whole? The orchestra in the Rue Bergère, I felt, *must* complete its labours perfectly. It is as unerring a machine as if there were a knout and Siberia outside the concert room, to punish all defaulters, — the system of discipline, it has been said, which was pursued with the redoubtable horn band of Prince Potemkin the magnificent!

What, then, — asks the enthusiast, impatient of distinctions and qualifications, and foreseeing what is to come, — can be wanting to the orchestra of the Conservatoire? I was very nearly challenged in Paris for hinting that, with all the *nuance* imparted to the band by M. Habeneck's admirable training, there was still missing that healthy and satisfying expressiveness which those who have heard German music well rendered by Germans will ever after demand in its execution. The moving principle of French music appears to me rhythmical time; — an exquisite finish and exact-

ness in laying note to note; a certain vivacity of temperament, which even communicates its colour to the slowest music, and drives the quickest towards the *mouvement de galoppe*—the utmost indulgence of the propensity. Whether or not—to dissect with extreme nicety—such a disposition tends towards a superabundance, or at least a misappropriation, of accent, I leave to the "darkly learned:" it tends, however, I cannot but think, to the discouragement of that solidity without slackness which is indispensable to the execution of the grandest music. And, slight though the difference was felt to be *,

* I cannot but note, a little more exactly, one or two of what I thought the short-comings of the *Conservatoire* edition of Beethoven. First, in all the triple rhythms, a want of sensibility—a want of that undulating flow which (familiarly to illustrate) distinguishes a *valse* from a $\frac{6}{8}$ quadrille movement in the same time, or Strauss from Musard. My journal, too, notes want of elegance as chargeable to the leading phrase of the Beethoven symphony in A.



in spite of every thing that fineness of touch can do,—of a dazzling brilliancy in the stringed

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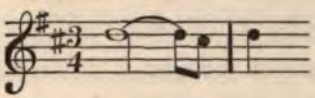
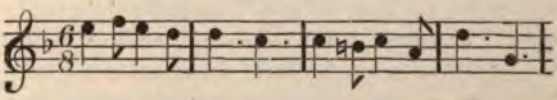
"The minuet," continues the same valuable authority, "was taken too fast—and still not blithely enough; while the splendid subject in the *trio*—



lost all its dignity from the acceleration of time; and the second part of the same movement, all its voluptuous richness from being performed almost entirely without *nuance*. Perhaps I am hard to please in this, from the circumstance of my always associating those notes—I know not why—with the passage of the Egyptian queen down the Cydnus, described in my favourite 'Antony and Cleopatra' of Shakspeare:

"'The barge she sat in was of burnish'd gold,' &c."

Again, the second subject of Moscheles' overture—



was given drily and without flow. The performance of this latter work was, throughout, chargeable with a total absence of that *laisser aller*, without which no composition of the picturesque school can produce the slightest effect.

In the *allegro* of the "Leonora" overture, and in the *allegro* of Beethoven's Symphony in B flat, there seemed

instruments,—of a promptitude and gentleness in the wind instruments, we conceive not here,—I remained cold. My judgment was convinced by the perfection of cleverness, but my heart was not touched by that right feeling and thorough meaning which is indispensable in the rendering of the music of thought as distinguished from the music of mechanism. Somehow or other, what I heard seemed as far from the real deep-felt delivery of Beethoven, as the occasional "*Superbe!*" and "*Magnifique!*" of the audience, discharged in proper places, is from the real praise which that music demands. They try to come out of themselves in Paris; they do

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a general flippancy of delivery to my ear, which I found *had* existed (as least as far as I comprehend the term) when I afterwards heard the same movements by the Leipsic orchestra. In the *trio* of the minuet of the same Symphony,—a portion requiring the utmost delicacy and readiness on the part of the violins, which ought to sprinkle the melody, as it were, with quick bird-like notes,—the Conservatoire orchestra was beyond all praise. I have, perhaps, extracted enough to illustrate the nature of my exceptions;—which, be it added, would be ridiculous if taken against any body of players short of the most consummate mechanical perfection.

their best to approach those mighty works, but the achievement is above them and beyond them.*

* There is nevertheless a rage for Beethoven in Paris, as there have been rages for Scott, Byron, and Goethe, to which we can show nothing analogous. And his works have some excellent and earnest interpreters, who plunge, though feverishly rather than steadily, deep into his mysteries. I have not forgot the pretty little suite of apartments, *au quatrième*, No. 42. Rue Lafitte, where I heard the posthumous quartetts of Beethoven disentangled by a party led by M. Seghers, and to which M. Alexandre Batta is violoncellist, with a conscientiousness and depth of feeling that brought me far nearer an understanding of that difficult music than I had ever come before. The *matinées* at which these works were played were charming. The audience was at once miscellaneous and select: the breathless interest there being silence of a quality different from the forced attention of the Conservatoire audience. M. Batta, however, (whose remarkable power in this highest order of music has been never properly exhibited to the English public,) is not Parisian by birth, but Belgian; and there is a fineness of musical organisation in his country, so rich and copious in its fruits as to claim separate attention. The nature of its confection is, perhaps, hinted at by Victor Hugo, in his fanciful lines "written on the pane of a Flemish window" (Les Rayons et les Ombres), where he apostrophises —

"Noble Flandre, où le Nord se rechauffe engourdi
Au soleil de Castille et s'accouple au Midi."

tional elevation of the Corale in Mendelssohn's "Lobgesang." I felt — perhaps this is mere wire-drawing — that the audience of the Rue Bergère would have done the most thorough justice to its sensations in a well-turned *mot* or a vague rhapsody: that it possessed no deeper fountain of praise to draw from than such as would have been resorted to had the theme been a new *ballet* or a new melodrame.

All this I said to my journal at the moment when my impressions were fresh. What possessed me to broach such an unpalatable heresy in a French *salon* I cannot precisely recollect: possibly extravagant self-praise irritated my self-conceit to the controversial point. Let no *fanatico* ever trust himself to speak out on such occasions, lest he talk temper instead of sense! or lest there befall him what befell me. "*We* not understand Beethoven!" was the response in full chorus. "Beethoven is only understood in Paris:" and the old story of the neglect shown by the Viennese to their great composer was thrown in my teeth, with a *quantum suff.* of insinuations that "for an Englishman to talk

about music at all, without a national opera as we were, &c. &c.,—yet more, to presume to criticise the Conservatoire,—was something really too pleasant!"

"Well," I said, at last, breaking out a little impatiently as my antagonists became more and more supercilious, "you can hardly charge upon England such an instance of false enthusiasm as was shown here on the occasion of one of Liszt's concerts."

"*O, par exemple!*"

"I mean," continued I, "when he chose to reverse his *programme*, and play a trio by Pixis in the place of one of Beethoven; and the Pixis trio was applauded to the skies for the grandeur of its ideas, as so superb, so mystical!—while the Beethoven trio was hardly listened to, and pronounced stale, mechanical, and commonplace. Am I not correct in my anecdote?"

There was a dead silence. By one of those ill-natured freaks of Fortune which deserve to befall all those who mean to be severe in argument, my very antagonist, whom I had intended to demolish by my tale, was precisely one of the

cognoscenti who had been foremost in the blunder, — and noisiest in crying-up the inferior music as Beethoven's!

The vocal portion at the Conservatoire concerts I attended was so ill executed, as to make even the Temple scene from Gluck's "Alceste," not ill declaimed by Mademoiselle Capdeville, a blemish rather than an attraction. But the well-known March! — there the Parisians had the true tradition; and its execution by the most exquisite orchestra I have ever heard was of itself worth a journey to Paris. All that could be wished of flowing dignity, — of broad, but not square simplicity, — of rich solemnity, — was there: and those few bars of melody raised in my mind the emotions I had vainly sought at Berlin in the presentment of the same master's "Iphigenie." A rough but sprightly chorus, from "Les Indes Galantes" of Rameau, was also a thorough treat. I heard, too, a violin adagio of Bach's, most deliciously finished by M. Habeneck, but not felt in the true Leipsic style; and some other clever *solo* playing, any distinct recollection of which has escaped me. As a whole,

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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] rather than to [illegible] willing and [illegible] spirit, perhaps, the [illegible] spoke the [illegible] which M.—— [illegible] suggestion I [illegible] with the [illegible] Churchill,—"[illegible] mere merely to say that the French [illegible] Germans, I give up."

MUSIC AND MANNERS

IN

GERMANY.

THE LEIPSIC FAIR.

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THE LEIPSIC FAIR.

CHAP. I.

THE CONCERTS.

The Leipsic Fair a Tonic.—The Road from Berlin.—The Road from Frankfort.—Picturesque Towns.—Half an Hour at Weimar.—A Sonnet in the Frauen Platz.—M. Chelard.—Centralisation in Music.—A Word about Hummel and the Court of Weimar.—Aspect of Leipsic.—Its Advantages as a Residence for an Artist.—Arrival.—My Lodgings.—A Walk through the Fair.—Costumes.—Jews and Tyrolese.—A Modern Autolycus.—Unexpected Rencontres.—The Theatre of Leipsic.—Dr. Burney and Herr Hiller.—Mademoiselle Schlegel.—More French Operas.—"Les Huguenots."—Herr David's Leadership (and a Note touching Chamber-Music).—Dr. Mendelssohn Bartholdy.—The Subscription Concerts.—The *Programmes*.—The Directors.—Herr Rochlitz.—Herr Hartel.—Great Variety of Research; and its admirable Effects.—The Perform-

ance of Beethoven's Symphonies. — The Gewand-haus. —Crowded Audiences. — The Orchestra.— The Singers.—The Suppers after the Concert.

WHETHER as regards health, spirits, or musical taste (the latter palled by inanimate repetitions of inferior works, or disappointed by imperfect versions of master compositions), I can imagine no tonic better than the Leipsic Autumn Fair, as I took it in 1839 and 1840.

From Berlin to Leipsic, the journey of a night and half a day is singularly insipid, save for Wittemberg: from Frankfort, the road, two nights and a day and a half in length, to measure distance by schnellpost time, is more engaging. First comes the fruit district, which is rich and joyous by reason of its plenty. To this succeeds the country in the Kinsig Thal, which, though not particularly beautiful, has a pastoral character of its own. When the Red Land and the Thuringian Wood are entered, there is some fine forest scenery; and about Eisenach the road winds among a succession of hills, clothed with trees, which make a brilliant panorama, when they are seen in their autumnal

dress. The towns, too, along this road are most of them worth a day's halt: Fulda, for its ecclesiastical remains; Eisenach, for its clean, picturesque market-place, and its vicinity to the Wartburg — Luther's Patmos, where the stains of ink with which he assaulted The Devil still blot the wall; Gotha, for its University and Palace; Weimar, for the sake of the brilliant court of intellect and genius which once ruled Germany thence. I have not myself taken a pilgrim's rest at any of these "stations," but at the last I availed myself of an hour's halt on my last journey, to go and stand before the house where Goethe dwelt; and, though it is but like any other house, and the fountain before it like any other fountain, both stand out distinct in my memory, from a circumstance, in itself trifling, associated with them. The Frauen-Platz, a little irregular space, was empty even of loitering children: the noon was warm and sunshiny. In one of the upper windows, from which the poet had looked out, I caught the profile of the colossal helmeted head of the Goddess of Wisdom; in another, half-opened,

behind the muslin curtain, stood an exquisite nosegay of brilliant autumn flowers. One would not have remarked these things elsewhere, but seen in a Goethe's house they were sufficient to set the fancy in motion.

Where mighty ones have been, O ne'er erase
  One touch, one print, one memory! Ev'n the weed
  That clings around the threshold-posts would speed
The enthusiast's rapture, could he only trace
That e'er the Master, lingering by that place,
  Vouchsafed its wan and worthless bloom to heed.
  And thus 'twas precious, when I stood to read
The words o'er Goethe's door, to meet the face
  Of high Minerva smiling gravely bland;
The Goddess there — her priest and follower gone!
  And when I mark'd how some benignant hand
Had gathered flowers, and placed them in the sun,
  It pleased my fancy well, that wreath so fair
  Should deck the silent shrine whose Angel still is
    there!

The musician would probably find his account in lingering longer than a day at Weimar, for the sake of the fruits of M. Chelard's *kapellmeister*-ship in the management of its musical theatre. We have not yet, in England, forgotten his capital conduct of the first German Opera company (that of 1832) which revealed

to us the "Fidelio" of Beethoven. What a grievous pity for dramatic music in Germany is it that all these little capitals, each with its carefully mounted theatre, its diligent orchestra, and its clever superintendant, should not be united in a general league of good understanding for the promotion and encouragement of national genius! For popular enjoyment, their present diffused state of force and power and influence may be better than such musical centralisation as makes every French aspirant fix his eyes on Paris as his sole arena; but for the progress and encouragement of the artist, there is much that is eminently dissatisfactory in the fact that his local fame serves him little in the next town; and that, however much his own court applauds his opera, it stands a poor chance of gaining a gracious hearing elsewhere.

Nor can the *fanatico* pass Weimar, and forget Hummel, who was *Kapellmeister* there during the period which makes so brilliant a figure in the annals of Germany. Honest, rough, and kind-hearted; thoroughly belonging to the old

school; in youth sanitily educated, and severely corrected; unable, as far as I am aware, to dissect and to analyse the art which his pianoforte-playing so richly adorned, with that acuteness and refinement of research which the accomplished men around him so loved to indulge in;—an inferior musician, who was a more eloquent talker, might probably have made a more notable figure in the Golden Book of Weimar. I confess myself to have been as much pained as surprised (for it is painful to have admiration lessened) on finding, from more than one source, that the general treatment of the German musical artist at Weimar—that highly vaunted centre of enlightenment—bore no proportion to the encouragement extended to the painter, the poet, or even the passing English stranger. I have been told, on authority hard to dispute, that Hummel, when almost a patriarch in his art, on the evenings of his performance at Court, was allowed to remain among the cloaks, pattens, and umbrellas of the guests till the moment for his exhibition arrived: this unworthy usage being broken through by the spirit of a younger artist, who, on being treated

in a similar despotic fashion (after receiving a direct and courteous invitation as a private individual), walked quietly out of the *Residenz*, to the great discomfiture of a circle convened for the express purpose of profiting by the talent the conveners knew not how to honour.

But, be the pilgrim ever such a Goethe-worshipper, be he musician or amateur, gentle or simple, humourist or journalist or novelist, or merely the traveller who hires a carriage and a courier as a means of getting rid of much vacant time and loose cash, let no one within a hundred miles of the place miss the Leipsic Fair. The town in itself (or personal liking has prejudiced me) has a quaint, cheerful, and friendly appearance. Within the walls, high richly-decorated houses and old churches seem almost toppling over each other, so thickly are they set. Without, where the ramparts were, is an irregular pleasure-ground, spreading out in some places to such a respectable amplitude as to secure privacy for the walker. Beyond this belt is another ring, made up of houses, some of them set in gardens, richly dressed and full

of flowers; the prettiest, most inviting residences which kind hearts and distinguished musicians could find. The town is rich in both. There I found that cheerful, simple, unselfish, and intelligent artistic life which many have been used to imagine as universally German. Leipsic has no court to stiffen its social circles into formality, or to hinder its presiding spirits from taking free way: on the other hand, it possesses a University to stir its intelligences, a press busy and enterprising, and a recurrence of those gatherings which bring a representative of every class of society in Europe together. These last can hardly pass over — be they for mere money-getting, be they for mere merry-making — without disturbing the settlement of that stagnant and pedantic egotism into which the strongest of minds are apt to sink when the wheel of life moves too slowly, or the circle of cares is too narrow.

To be sure, the first moments of my arrival at Leipsic in 1839 were unpropitious enough. I had come from Berlin without stopping. It was a lowering, showery afternoon; and, finding it impossible to gain any hotel accom-

modation, I was transferred by the most indefatigable of all landlords — him, I mean, of the Hôtel de Bavière — to a lodging, four stories high, close in his neighbourhood. The common staircase which led to my nest was dark and ruinous, and of course an inch thick with dirt, since every room in every story of the house was occupied by its own trader or traders. The floor of my chamber, too, when I reached it, was under water; and an old skinny bare-legged Sycorax was paddling about in slippers, on pretence of making every thing clean, as she paddled about whooping to an old man as miserable-looking as herself, and, moreover, imbued thoroughly with tobacco. There was no remaining to witness the issue of these operations; so, having deposited my baggage high and dry above the reach of the flood, taking it for granted that somehow or other the place would be made habitable before bed-time (*box*-time one ought to call it in Germany), I strolled out to search for a dinner, and to study the humours of the Fair.

I do not remember to have been ever more

thoroughly amused than during that walk. Sympathising, to a childish degree, in Charles Lamb's passion for shop-window prospects and the human countenance, I was arrested at every step by the high buildings, with wares of every conceivable quality streaming out of every window, from garret to cellar: — food for the mind in books, pleasure for the eye in prints, Nuremberg toys and that many-coloured Bohemian glass which makes the booths where it is exhibited glitter like Aladdin's palace; — clothing for the body, in the shape of furs, woollen goods, knitted garments of form and use totally unintelligible to English eyes, and magnificent lengths of glaring calico which "the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling" may accept, if he be willing, for pageant banners when Day begins to close in. Then the vendors! Here were peasantesses, presiding over their homely wares, in enormous winged caps, with long streamers, or tight forehead-bands of black lace, and every variety of tunic, joseph, petticoat, polonaise, and Hessian boot. There was a man — Heaven knows whence! — from head to

heel of the colour of mud, with a huge hat, like an over-ripe mushroom in shape, not half covering his long unkempt hair,—who stopped and pressed every one to buy his mousetraps, in a deep melancholy voice that at once put to flight all the notions of *brigandage* and blackguardism which a first glance excited. Close behind, a couple of Jews, in their glossy camlet gaberdines and high-furred caps, made excellent painters' figures: one of the pair with a long yellow beard, so glossy and crisp and curling as to form a wonderful feature in a picture, however ill it assorted with the keen small eyes and the hooked physiognomy belonging to "the tribes;" while the chin of his companion, who was pale as a ghost and spectrally thin, was garnished — it might have been for contrast's sake — with a luxury of black hair. The next trader, perhaps, was a grave and stately Oriental, in his flowing robes and white turban, sitting patiently behind his stall of pipe *waaren*, or gliding up — the most courteous of merchants — with essenced amulets and necklaces of black clay, hanging in cataracts over

the edge of his pedlar's box. Among the people I most liked to meet in the Fair, were the Tyrolese. One establishment or brotherhood of four great brawny audacious men stands before me as I write, with their steeple hats punched out with nosegays, and their round jackets, their leather girdles, and their velvetten breeches, displaying clear white stockings and calves to set up a score of Irish chairmen;—the most impudent, merriest, best-natured disciples of Autolycus that ever went forth to hamboude or amuse the world of Dorcases and Mopsas. One of them—some six feet high—had a particular propensity to creep into the hotels at high dinner-tide, and to warm himself into the thickest of the crowd, where the prettiest women were to be found; tempting them, like his archetype, to buy "a tawdry lace and a pair of sweet gloves," with impudent flatteries there was no resisting. All the world knows, ever since the days of the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, how relishing even a dustman's compliment may be! And my friend admired the small wrists and the white hands to such good purpose, that brisk

was the trade he drove, and many the pair of rotten gloves and trumpery bracelets he would get rid of, ere discovery of his presence overtook him, and the eager perspiring crowd of *kellners*, enraged at being interrupted in their service, began to abuse him and to order him out. Not a step would he budge, having taken up a good position. More than once, an absolute chase ensued to clear the room, when the varlet, suddenly diving under one of the tables, presented his waggish face and his box at the other side, in some corner so inaccessible, with such a pertinacious determination to make good his ground, that resistance was in vain, and he was permitted to finish his traffic in triumph. I ought to be rather ashamed to own the acquaintance; but, after one of these *escapades*, whether he had seen encouragement and diversion in my face I know not, my friend the Tyroler never after met me in the street without choosing to stride along by my side for a considerable distance, laughing and chattering like a magpie, and offering to carry for me whatever I might happen to have in my hand.

Nor are such groups as these the only ones which make the Leipsic Fair so amusing to all who love to study character. The strangers and guests are as miscellaneous as the traders. He must indeed be a lonely man, or have lived all his life in the most tarry-at-home circle of his country, who can escape from picking up there some old acquaintance or some new friend. The number of known and unexpected faces the pilgrim will meet, swept away by the next wave of arrivals, is not the least of the attractions of the place and the time, which make him feel, ere he has been four and twenty hours in Leipsic, as if he had been familiar with it all his life! One day it will be his lot, perhaps, at table to face a pair of the cold, thoroughly-dressed figures whom he has left doing their part in crowding the London season without animating it; another, his acquaintance, who sixteen years ago came to England to learn its language and mercantile business, will turn up; another, the discoverer, who, when they parted last, was bound for the Andes or the North Pole; another, the artist or

artiste, whom he has at home admired at a distance in concert-room or theatre. If, indeed, he be a musician, he is sure of interesting encounters at the Fair of Leipsic; and no wonder, since in that town, as I knew it, resides the heart of Northern Germany's musical vitality.

The theatre of Leipsic, pleasantly set in a little plantation, is within a small and shabby building. In Burney's time, though its performances were under the direction of M. Hiller, the style of singing was denounced by him as coarse and vulgar, inasmuch as the Italian traditions, which had been introduced early in the century, had been forgotten by the vocalists. A reason somewhat curious, when it is remembered that the aforesaid Hiller was Mara's master; and that she was confessedly at the head of European *cantatrici* as a vocalist! In 1839 it had not much to boast of, save an excessively fresh and pleasing voice in the person of Mademoiselle Schlegel, the comeliest of comely *blondes*, some seventeen years of age, who, though already ample in person, had not as yet lost that youthful deli-

[illegible] of appearance which generally passes away sadly soon from the stage-heroines of Germany. Leipsic seemed as entirely devoted to French opera as the other towns I visited. While the thin and wearisome "Caramo" of Lortzing put every one to sleep, as it did me, "Les Huguenots" and "Gustave," performed under every disadvantage of locale, drew crowded auditories.

I saw the former; and a more curious performance I never witnessed. Owing to the quantity of supernumerary instruments introduced by Meyerbeer into his score, and the limited scale of the orchestral force, the result at Leipsic was, that the wind-instruments almost outnumbered the violins, to the utter destruction of those proportions upon the observance of which Meyerbeer lays so much stress for the due production of his effects. Nevertheless, the whole work, vast and complicated as it is, went without flaw or faltering; and, harsh as the orchestra was compelled to be (the stringed instruments having no other chance of being heard at all), an outline of the whole work was

traced with a coarse fidelity, if I may so express it, which surprised me; and, by the care and intelligence indicated, gave me pleasure, in spite of my constant and (some call it) prejudiced attachment to the Grand Opera of Paris. It is my conviction that no amount of preparation or practice, in the most operatic days of our English theatres, would have enabled either one or other to give so spirited though sketchy a version of that complex music. And when I encountered —— and ——, by the presumption of so small a body of singers and instrumentalists attempting works so enormous, thrown into fits of disapproval so violent that they would not vouchsafe to witness murder so flagrant; — willing though I was to concede the utter impropriety of the choice of such an opera, I could not but insist that the manner of its performance implied a perfection of leadership I had never fallen in with elsewhere.

And so it does. I have met with no one at the executive head of an orchestra to compare with Herr David. Spirit, delicacy, and consummate intelligence, and that power of com-

municating his own zeal to all going along with him, are combined in no ordinary measure, and with the crowning charm of that good-will and sympathy which only await citizens as worthy, head and heart, (in the very best sense of the epithet,) as he is. A sour, or conceited, or irregularly-living man might, it is possible, know his professional duties as well; but he would never be followed by his townsfolk with such eager and cheerful zeal, if my faith in the connection of Art and Society be founded upon any reality.

I could say more of Herr David's leading, as a thing in my experience entirely unique. I could dwell, too, upon the pleasant life he leads in his garden-house (the *beau idéal* of a German musician's residence), spent in a constant interchange of good offices, musical and social, with his townsmen and strangers *, unbroken by a shade, on

* I never enjoyed the luxury of chamber instrumental music so richly as among my friends at Leipsic. One day it took the form of pianoforte-playing of some new MS. trio, or some Beethoven sonata; another evening a quartett, only to be matched by the Zimmermann quartett at Berlin; sometimes an adagio by Bach; sometimes a mazurka or impromptu by Chopin: and all this was

his part, of envy or irritability, or those other petty feelings of cabal and intrigue which eat the hearts away of so many artists. But when a friend is in the case, self-restraint in the

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lavished with such an apparent ease and conformity to daily habit, as to lessen materially the burden of the obligation which, as an insignificant stranger, I should otherwise have felt. But the very kindness and *domesticity* of the pleasure, so to say, prevent my dwelling upon it minutely, if I would not break the plan I have laid down in printing from my journals. I cannot, however, pass a convocation made by Mendelssohn in honour of Moscheles (who was passing through Leipsic), at which I was present last Autumn, because in its scale and splendour it approached a public performance, while in its friendliness and ease it retained all the charm of "a little music by one's own fireside." The admirable concert orchestra was collected; and performed two of the Leonora overtures of Beethoven, and Mendelssohn's own picturesque overture known in England as "The Isles of Fingal," as well as accompanied the distinguished guest in one of his own concertos. Besides this, we had one of Mendelssohn's psalms, admirably sung by the amateurs of the place; the "Hommage à Handel" of Moscheles, played by its composer and Mendelssohn; and one of Sebastian Bach's concertos for three pianofortes. Perhaps, never was music so well played, or so exquisitely enjoyed; and I shall feel warmed and satisfied by the recollection of that evening as long as I retain memory or gratitude.

amount of praise should keep pace with fastidiousness of judgment. It is a cruel thing to load the true-hearted and highly cultivated with the *plaster* of fulsome laudation; and I would not have said as much as this, might not all that I have journalised be warranted to the full by the most cynical or preoccupied stranger, amateur or professional, who has ever assisted at one of the Leipsic Concerts.

For the perfection of these, however, as regards spirit and intention, one greater than even my excellent friend David is answerable, — I mean, of course, Mendelssohn. In his case, too, I feel that shrinking which makes it impossible, when with those one likes best and esteems the most highly, in good set phrase to rehearse their gifts and graces. Enough to say, that all that Education among a home-circle of brilliant and enlarged intelligences, and during an extensive course of foreign travel, could do to cultivate poetical genius, and to enlarge sympathies by Nature liberally given, has been done: — enough, that simplicity of heart has never been spoilt, nor integrity of purpose lost sight of;—that brilliant professional dis-

tinction, and a happy home, have been granted to the artist before he has reached the prime of his manhood, — things bringing with them enrichment, not exhaustion. And must we not own, that the phrase made use of by one of his early friends, "The boy came into the world upon a lucky day," has been the motto of his life? and shall we not readily conceive how the presence of such a person, to leaven and enkindle the artistic circles of a kind and friendly place, must tend, happily associated as he is with so rare a right-hand man, to bring the establishments under his care to the fullest health and perfection? Taking the subscription concerts of Leipsic as the most perfect expression of the musical spirit of Germany with which I have fallen in, it was impossible, in describing them, to overlook the elements which contribute so very largely to the creation and permanence of their success.

Exclusive of benefit and charitable concerts, the winter series of these entertainments extends to twenty performances. Nowhere in Germany is the *cramming* system of five con-

secutive hours of music resorted to; and I have seen our monstrous London *programmes* hoarded up and spelt over like curiosities from Nootka Sound or Ceylon: — but still, to provide variety for a score of evenings, in the present dearth of compositions of the highest order, requires no ordinary measure of intellectual energy. Yet this is done at Leipsic without parade or without charlatanry. The Directors of these concerts, a committee of gentlemen, — among whom are not to be forgotten Herr Rochlitz, the patriarch of German critics, and Herr Hartel *, whose name is historical among all

* I scarcely need remind the musician that Herrn Breitkopf and Hartel were among the earliest, and have been always among the most extensive, publishers of the modern classical music of Germany. In this respect, too, the amount of life and enterprise at Leipsic is wonderful. The orchestral scores, the oratorios, the operas, the theoretical works, &c. &c. &c., which its four presses pour out, must strike with amazement those who are familiar with the flimsy staple of the wares disseminated by the London publishers. Nor do Herrn Breitkopf and Hartel, and Kistner, and Hofmeister, and Peters content themselves with the coarse paper and coarse type which the German *littérateur* is obliged to be satisfied with from his publishers. I have never seen music so splendidly issued as by the second establishment.

those caring for continental music, — seconding Dr. Mendelssohn, open their doors liberally to every instrumental work that is new and of promise; taking good care, however, in doubtful cases, to assure the interest of the evening's performance by the repetition of some favourite and well-known production. Even in the four concerts I have attended, during my two visits to Leipsic, — besides two symphonies by Beethoven (precisely the pair I have heard at the Conservatoire), two symphonies by Mozart, two overtures by Weber, and one by Spohr, — a pianoforte and a violin, a trombone and a flute concerto, — I chanced to fall in with the whole of one act and the overture of M. Chelard's last opera, "Der Hermannschlacht," and a grand manuscript concert cantata by Marschner, with an overture, songs, and choruses, — one of those efforts which composers must ere long be driven to make, as the world grows more enlightened, to relieve the orchestra from the "three times skimmed sky-blue" iteration of opera songs and duets, without dresses, decorations, or the gestures

which on the stage are so moving. Neither Chelard's nor Marschner's effort was worth the labour bestowed upon it; but the want with us of such catholicity and enterprise as brought this music forward has gone far, by permitting audiences to remain within one unchanging and narrow circle, to destroy more than one of our musical establishments of high renown.* These very trials and hearings of all that rising contemporary talent can do, instead of seducing the love of an audience from its old objects of reverence, tend, by contrast, to make what is sterling more sterling, and what is grand grander; and to send listeners back

* Among other devices employed for giving interest to the programmes of the Leipsic Concerts, I cannot pass over the performance of Beethoven's four overtures to "Fidelio" on the same evening, to afford the curious means of comparison: or the series of three or more historical concerts, in which the effect meditated by Spohr in his strangely incoherent symphony was produced, by progressive selections of instrumental music, beginning with Bach and Handel. We are still too far from being ripe for such performances as these,—too largely apt to treat all public exhibitions as mere aimless amusements, where the most piquant novelty is the one thing best worth pursuing.

to the unfading masterpieces of Music with a sharpened relish. Never, indeed, did I hear the symphonies of Beethoven so intensely enjoyed as at Leipsic, and never so admirably performed. As regarded those works of the Shakspeare of music, I felt, for the first time in my life, richly and thoroughly satisfied beyond reserve or question. There was a breadth and freedom in their outlines, a thorough proportion in all their parts, a poetical development of all their choice and picturesque ideas, which fully compensated for the occasional want of the hyper-brilliancy and the hyper-delicacy, on the possession of which my friends in Paris boast themselves so vaingloriously. It was not hearing Beethoven played, — it was revelling among his noble creations; and with the most perfect security that nothing would interfere to break the spell, or to call you back from the Master's thought to the medium in which it was given forth. Then those small aggravations of emphasis, those slight retardations of time, neither finically careful nor fatiguingly numerous,—for which Imagination thirsts so

The ladies of the place occupy the centre of the room, sitting in two *vis-à-vis* divisions — that is, sideways to the orchestra. Behind them crowd the *herrn* so thickly, that any one going as late as half an hour before the music strikes up, will run a chance of being kneaded into the wall by the particularly substantial proportions of those before him, whom no good-natured wish to accommodate a stranger can make thin. More than once, by the obliging intervention of a friend at court, I was enabled to take refuge within the rails of the orchestra. This was not the best situation in the world for the whole effect, but it enabled me, almost by participation, to appreciate the untiring vigilance and industry of the performers, and the honest goodwill with which they not only betook themselves to their task, but regarded each other. The orchestra numbers some sixty or seventy performers; precisely the number, so Beethoven's biographers tell us, which the great master conceived to be the best suited to the adequate performance of his symphonies. The vocal music of these concerts is generally mainly

sustained by the presence of some one stranger engaged for the series, and such resident talent as the town affords. In two successive years, two of our countrywomen, Miss Novello and Mrs. A. Shaw, filled the former position with brilliant credit. In 1839, the young Belgian lady, Mademoiselle Meerti (who has since done her part in London in establishing the claims of her country as one rich in musicians) was the favourite of Leipsic. In 1840, things were less auspiciously ordered; a Mademoiselle Schloss, who had received much training as the resident lady, triumphantly maintaining her ground against Mademoiselle Meerti's successor. The latter, Mademoiselle List, stood upon the ground of her beauty. As regards her singing, I cannot conceive how it could ever have been brought to an end with any orchestra less admirably under conduct; and, after counting five notes in one bar and nine in another, in the vain hope of ascertaining what was the real *tempo* of the movement in which she was engaged, I went home penetrated with admiration at the courtesy of my Leipsic friends in playing out of time when "a lady was in the case."

Very pleasant were those concerts, and very pleasant — though any thing but English — the suppers which sometimes succeeded them,—when parties of nine or a dozen ladies and gentlemen would repair to one of the hotels, to do justice to the good things of its *speise-harte;* and the animated scene of the dinner was more gaily repeated, from the ladies being in evening-dress. To be sure, I could not help lamenting over the fresh and pretty toilettes that must have gone home, in some cases, saturated with tobacco-smoke; and it was sometimes difficult to hear a word that passed in the midst of the noise of the service of the table — the explosion of champagne corks — and the diapason of a violent and busy band of music, playing Strauss and Bellini and Auber with an untiring industry hard to sympathise with when the ears are full with Beethoven and Mozart. Such a Babel of mirth and good-fellowship, such a mingling of many odours, I never encountered elsewhere. I cannot wish that such a Leipsic fashion should be brought home to us, with the Leipsic style and conception of what orchestral music means. But there it

CHAP. II.

TRACES OF BACH.

The Chorus of the Concerts. — The Thomas-Schule. — The Thomas-Kirche. — The Interior reminding me of "Quintus Fixlein."—A Mass in a Lutheran Church. — The Manner of Execution. — The Old Days of the Thomas-Schule.—Music and Learning.—George Rhau. — The Reformation. — Luther a Promoter of Music, though an Iconoclast.— Slight Remembrances of Kühnau and Bach. — Music "of all Time." — Permanence a Characteristic of Bach's Style. — Bach still the Teacher in Leipsic. — Style of Music and Performance most relished in Leipsic. — Madame Schumann, with a Note on the "Kreissleriana." — Leipsic Taste accused by a visitor of a leaning towards the *Perruque*.

In describing the admirable features of the Leipsic Concerts, I must not forget the chorus. This, indeed, tells as significant a story to the speculative traveller as the drop-curtain of L'Académie Royale, or the Caryatides of the Berlin Opera House.

On my first visit to the Gewand-haus, being obligingly admitted to a rehearsal, I was struck

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large irregular mass of grey stone, the principal member of which, with its high sloping roof, assists picturesquely to break the town "prospect," on which ever side it is contemplated. Close beneath it, you are shown a couple of windows in the grey wall which have an ancient but not a dreary aspect, overlooking as they do a cluster of flowering shrubs. The windows belong to the house of Sebastian Bach, who was for many years Cantor of the Thomas-Schule. All who have enterprise enough in the cause of good music to rise and fare forth at eight on the Sunday morning may hear the choristers of the still flourishing establishment sing in the church *their* musical services, before the prayers and the preaching commence.

The Thomas-Kirche, like most other of the German churches I know, is, internally, a lofty as well as a spacious building; and, though it be no less closely shorn of the *insignia* of Popery, it is infinitely less naked and bleak-looking than the Dom at Brunswick. The white walls, on which the stucco has been capriciously destroyed, are hung with galleries and pews like bird-cages,

The boys sang remarkably well; and the music requires no common skill and certainty. There is a chromatic modulation in the "Qui tollis," very difficult to execute in tune,—at which I have heard some of our most redoubtable artists hesitate; but it went over so smoothly, and without force, that I scarcely knew when it had passed. The boy, too, to whom was allotted the principal *solo* (according to the ordinance bequeathed to us from olden times, which denies Woman a voice in prayer and praise no less than in state affairs), had tones less freshly crude, and thus more welcome to the ear, than those of any urchin I have ever heard. He was a clever musician, too, as I had often occasion to notice at concert rehearsals; with an arch, audacious eye, and that ready vivacity of look and gesture which seemed to promise the stage an excellent singer on some future day.

It was more than musically interesting thus to stumble upon a relic of the old church foundations, amongst which all Art received its first cultivation and encouragement; and to find

one of those very establishments which, by its mysteries and moralities enacted on high festival days, afforded to all Christendom the earliest ideas of operatic representation, still remaining, little impaired by change and revolution, to lend support and encouragement to secular Music.

As long ago as the year 1213, a society of Augustine monks, among other principal objects of education for the good citizens of Leipsic in their monastic school, established also an institution for the training of a band, whose chief duties should be the musical services of the church: duties not held inconsistent with philosophical studies or classical attainments. And hence, from the earliest foundation of the Thomas-Schule of Leipsic, the Cantores (masters of music) seem to have been equally distinguished, equally reverenced, with the other teachers of learning and science at this school. And, in the annals of the establishment, the names of those who taught "plain song" keep loving companionship with those who expounded the dead languages or the

secrets of Philosophy. Passing many worthy names, it was only twenty years before the Reformation came, to load all that was of monkish origin with opprobrium, that we find in the records of the Thomas-Schule the name of a Cantor dwelt upon with particular emphasis. This was George Rhau, the friend of Melancthon and Luther; who, among other compositions, wrote a "Veni sancte Spiritus," which — on the occasion of the opening speech of a Leipsic disputation by Mosellanus, then Baccalaureus— he caused his scholars unexpectedly to strike up. Its effect was so solemn and overcoming, that the hearers fell upon their knees with one accord.

When the Reformation came, the Thomas-Schule was, of course, remodelled; but, though its papistical colour was effaced, this did not imply the severance of Music from the severer branches of learning. The idolatries of the Mass were to be abolished; but, to deprive worship of one of its most natural utterances, which the priests and Levites in the Jewish Temple and the disciples in the Christian Gethsemane had alike employed, never entered

into the brain of the Master-reformer — himself a musician by nature and by cultivation. Every where, on the contrary, did Luther inculcate the importance of the honest study, as well as of the chaste and dignified employment of the art. There are few German melodies of the epoch which have kept their place beside the tunes of his *Choral-Buch.* And the tendency of his mighty Reformation, though it was doubtless destructive to the imitative arts, inasmuch as it struck at the root of that hero-worship which was the originating principle of Painting and Sculpture, so far from bringing degradation to the musician, tended rather to exalt him to a companionship with the highest and most learned teachers of mankind. Thus the Cantor of the Thomas-Schule fared no worse under the new than under the old dispensation.* The honourable nature of

* In the autumn of 1840, the number of scholars on the foundation was fifty-eight. The qualifications for admission are—good morals, capacity for learning, and some natural musical aptitude; and the course of instruction is ample, and in concord with the original purposes of the school, that Music should neither be neglected for graver

his civic position, under a stricter rule, could not fail to incite him to a wide and noble course of action; and accordingly we find that, after many less eminent worthies, the predecessor of Bach—Kühnau—was elected organist of the Thomas-Kirche at the early age of seventeen years; the election being a consequence of the great sensation excited by the performance, at the Leipsic Fair, of one of the stripling's compositions by the students of the University. On his election he availed himself of every opportunity to prosecute the studies of jurisprudence, the mathematical sciences, and the Greek language; and, besides composing and writing many treatises on Music, he was a good Italian and French scholar, and translated several works from those languages. At the age of thirty-three he was elected to the direc-

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studies, nor deemed unworthy to bear them company. The Thomas-Schule has turned out many accomplished musicians — Herr Reissiger, the well-known composer and director of the Dresden Opera, among the number — and was described to me as one of the two most important establishments in North Germany,—the other being the Kreutz-Schule of Dresden.

[illegible] of the music of the Leipsic University, holding this conjointly with the cantorship or musical superintendence of the Thomas-Schule.

Of Kühnau's more eminent successor it is alike hard to speak or to be silent: difficult to praise him well—impossible to forget him. He was with me every where in North Germany. I thought of him in the clean old-world market-place of the town of his birth, Eisenach; with its church among the linden-trees, and its quaint fountain in the centre of the square; and its flying dolphins and dragons, which lean out from the high battlements of the houses, giving to that world-a-day thing, a spout, an air as quaintly graceful as Elizabethan fantasy gave in England to that ugly smoke-conduit, a chimney. I thought of his homely, affectionate, conscientious ancestors, by religious persecution driven from their native Hungary to take refuge in the Red Land of Thuringia*;—of the well-known meetings, when, on anniversaries and holidays, the dispersed branches of the family used to assemble

* See Forkel, and the other biographers of Sebastian Bach.

to make merry and sing edifying or jovial strains; and of the other recorded traits of their simple and loving affection which indicate warm hearts as well as plain lives and strong bodies. I thought of the early difficulties with which little Sebastian had to struggle; not, indeed, great or terrible, as compared with the ogres and giants which other musicians had slain, — but sufficient to prove his nerve and perseverance and resolution to become of weight and worship in his art: — how he sat up on moonlight nights, for want of candle, to copy the whole book of instrumental studies, the loan of which was refused to him by his brother — the one churlish Bach; — how he walked on foot from Arnstadt to Lubeck to hear Dietrich Buxtehude play, like any other stout craftsman, after the fashion of his country, fighting his way through Germany to perfect himself in his calling; and how, without revealing himself, he studied, for some months, the master's style in secret. I thought of the many tales of the patience, and modesty, and good citizenship which distinguished his manhood and old age; — how much self-respect

withal he never failed to show when the dignity of his art, or his own acquirements, were in question. And could all these things be forgotten under the very windows of the house — in that very church — where, for twenty years, he had planned and executed that magnificent series of works, which was never young and never will be old?

When I say "never young," I would submit that novelty (in the vulgar acceptation of the term) is not the most salient characteristic of the "Sebastiana." The orchestra, in the time of Bach, hardly existed, save in the simplest form; and I do not know that he did much to enlarge its resources. The organ had been already brought to a rare perfection; and, admirable as he was in its treatment, in the management of its rich tones and splendid convolutions of harmony, the best of organists was then a less dazzling wonder, a less potent wizard, than the Southern singer, who not only diffused a taste of rhythmical melody, but also the treasures of a vocal execution, which have never failed to prove the most fascinating of musical attractions. There is

every thing in Bach to impress—there is nothing in him to intoxicate. He had no chance, for the moment, against the Italians in Germany. Besides being in temperament and training indifferent to dramatic effect, he was too robust and self-asserting, like Hasse, utterly to denationalize himself; —like Graun, obsequiously to shape his style to the caprices of a sovereign. Though Zelter accuses his works of a certain French colour, which, at times, destroys their utter integrity, there is a nerve, a sinew, and a nationality in every line of them, which—had no subsequent composer, no Gluck or Beethoven, ever taken the same lofty ground — would make of his works a sufficient bulwark to which a great and reflective people fly for the security of their Art against foreign invasion. But, though he was honoured and esteemed at the time of his appearing, the Church was old—the Theatre new; and, for a while, as regarded influence, novelty carried off the palm.

That those, however, who never looked young never will look old, is an aphorism

applicable in Art as well as in physiognomy. Bach was one of these. I can never hear one of his sublime combinations, be it on the smallest scale, without the petty subdivisions of cycle and epoch fading utterly away,—without feeling myself more completely at the feet of a teacher than before any other musician. In them, Imagination is chastened, not denied play;—the executive power of human ingenuity called forth to the utmost, yet without the possibility of the ear for an instant mistaking the means for the end, — that which is outward and transient for that which is inward and perennial. School after school has passed away, form after form been exploded, — and now, when so much has been tried and judged and forgotten, the young musicians of Europe are falling upon the works of Bach as upon a mine of virgin treasure. Thus, also, Milton will never become obsolete, or the Greek drama antiquated. Both will remain as long as the frame of the world—indestructible citadels and beacons, in which Truth remains secure from harm—a light of guidance!

If (while in Leipsic) I rhapsodise about

Bach — that least rhapsodical of all composers — it is because every hour's experience confirmed my first impressions that his traditions still leaven the musical taste of the town. The excellent understanding with which all the measures of that most accomplished and liberal of music-directors, Dr. Mendelssohn, have been met is at once caused and effected by his being steeped in the knowledge and love of the Master of Leipsic. It was there, at all events, that I first began seriously to believe that, even in one and the same country, style might be found as delicately various and as numerous in its varieties as those of the *genus* for the moment most in request among the florists. It is true that, without stirring from home, I had long fancied that I could distinguish a Dublin singer by his disposition to drag the *tempo* of his music (in which he shares the idiosyncrasy of the Belgians). I had long known, again, how far a peculiar dialect influences vocal tone, by some acquaintance with our own Lancashire, Norfolk, and Middlesex chorus-singers. But it was only when the comparison of the *manners* of Berlin,

Leipsic, and Dresden was forced upon me within a short space of time that I ventured to recognise the existence of shades of mode, humour *, and tendency, hard to describe, yet as constant in their recurrence as the cut of a leaf or the shape of a blotch of colour (to ramble back to my garden-metaphor). With such recognition a new train of research and speculation seemed to open itself, the pursuit of which, if life and leisure permit, may perhaps one day do its part in assisting me in a meditated task — that of tracing back Music to its primal causes.

But, confining myself to my present "list of cases," certain it is that at Leipsic I found that the merits most cordially admired in instrumental composition and performance were a sober breadth of *reading* — grandeur without ponderosity —

* I may add that "the Vienna pianoforte-players" have past into a proverb, as illustrating brilliant and florid style on that instrument. In Dr. Burney's tour, a similar apportionment is also made; Vienna being then, according to him, "the most remarkable for fire and invention, Manheim for neat and brilliant execution, Berlin for counterpoint, and Brunswick for taste."

expression without caricature—light and shade without needless flourish. Whether I was listening to the orchestra, or to the pianoforte-playing of Mendelssohn, or to the *organ-playing* on the piano of Madame Schumann (best known in England by her maiden-name of Clara Wieck) who commands her instrument with the enthusiasm of a Sybil, and the grasp of a man,—or to the leading or the quartett playing of my incomparable friend David,—the same characteristic preferences forced themselves on my notice, to the satisfaction of the heart and mind, if not always of the imagination. A Leipsic audience seemed to me difficult, and perhaps over-exquisite, in its likings and dislikings, but not captious without the power of giving a reason. Among Beethoven's symphonies, for instance, the "Pastorale" is the least in favour, and the worst-played: the taste of the town not tending towards musical punning, or (to speak more reverently) to such literal imitation as calls up rivulets, birds, and thunder-storms, even when wielded by a Beethoven. Among Moscheles' pianoforte music, his fine broad

duett, the "Hommage à Handel" is a never-tiring favourite. In spite of the residence there of Herr Schumann, the German Berlioz, whose "Kreissleriana*," and other pianoforte compositions, are in the very wildest strain of extravagant mysticism, a regular concerto will probably be better relished at Leipsic than the most airy and delicate piece of fantasy of the newer schools. "*C'est un peu perruque ici!*" said —— to me one day; a little chagrined, I suspect, at my smiling at his enthusiastic arrogation to Paris of all the musical excellence

* The very title of these compositions, by recalling to the German reader one of Hoffmann's most fantastic creations, will acquaint him with their eccentricity and singularity, and *their design of not designing any settled effect.* To those who know not Hoffmann's writings in the original or translation I almost despair of unriddling the word in question. Band-master Kreissler, of whom a sort of Shandean use is made by that strange humourist, is an eccentric musical enthusiast; hence the fragments bearing his name (and bearing out his character) are as near regular and symmetrical musical compositions as Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" is to a complete epic. Herr Schumann has too much talent and learning to lose himself for ever in such mazes, which lead to nothing, when the broad highways of the art lie open before him.

now remaining in the world. "Perhaps," replied I, "you would call bread, or wine, or any thing else that nourishes without unhealthy stimulus, *perruque*, also?—or think, with the lady in the comedy, that spasms and fits of epilepsy are but an extravagance of health?" "Bah!" was the answer, as he turned upon his heel on his road to L'Académie and the Conservatoire of the French metropolis.

TWO VISITS

TO

DRESDEN.

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TO

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CHAPTER I.

THE OPERA AND ITS ENVIRONS. — 1839.

Railroad Travelling in Germany. — A National Propensity. — The Spirit of Dresden. — A Quatuorzain written on the Bruhl Terrace. — The Sights and Curiosities of the Place. — The Music I heard at Dresden. — A Country Walk. — The Opera-House. — The "Euryanthe" of Weber. — Its Cast. — Madame Schröder Devrient. — Herr Tichatschek. — The Orchestra. — The ugly Chorus. — Sketch of "Euryanthe."—The Absurdity of its *Libretto*.—"Cymbeline" destroyed. — The chivalresque Spirit of its Music. — The opening Chorus. — The part of *Adolar*. — The part of *Euryanthe;* its brilliancy. — Her *Bravura* in the Third Act, and its Shaksperian Close. — Strong Effect produced by the Music. — "Der May." — The Environs of Dresden. — Schiller's Closet. — Weber's Country House. — Pillnitz. — A Court Custom of

Sunny.—Royal Amateurship (with a Note from Dr. Burney).—Strange Forms of Royal Patronage.

That railroad travelling of Germany has features which are all its own. In England you are whirled along with an irresistible rapidity which entirely precludes the possibility of thought, or conversation, or enjoyment. The journey is a disagreeable, bewildering dream, made up of several blasts of the shrill steam-whistle—a few tunnels—a few broken clamours, timid or troublesome, of passengers on their entrance and exit—perhaps a few broken limbs,—the best part of which is its close. In Belgium there is more to observe: rich farms, stately belfries embroidered with tracery and ornament, are to be seen as you are swept—more leisurely than at home—from one town to another. But there is an amount of confusion and uncertainty which keeps the mind anxious. So many lines meet and diverge, and so awkwardly is the transmission of baggage managed, that it is seven chances to one but, while you are upon your road to the Rubenses at Antwerp, your "mails" may be

scouring along the rails to Ans (Liege). Hood's story of the bewildered lady, strong in her own foresight, who spent the day in travelling backwards and forwards betwixt Ghent and Ostend, owing to the want of her proper understanding, and her own prudence "in never getting out,"— is hardly a caricature. But betwixt Leipsic and Dresden no such whimsical casualties can happen. On the other hand, during the four hours which are to be expended in exchanging the town of Sebastian Bach for the Florence of Germany, you will assuredly see, gentle observer, a national propensity in its ripest development;—I mean the disposition of the best-hearted hosts and soundest instrumentalists of Europe to stop on every possible occasion — "*etwas zu essen.*"

I cannot describe how whimsically this wonderful appetite struck me on my constant journeys to and fro in Dresden. The train I chiefly used starts from Leipsic an hour after the early dinner; when the copious repast might surely, one would have thought, have sufficed for a part, at least, of the afternoon. No such thing. At

every one of the six or eight stations between the two towns — fruit, cakes, cups of broth, glasses of brandy, squares of sodden pastry with plums imbedded therein, biscuits, sandwiches, plums, pears, and other garden *etcetera*, are proffered to the caravan, from baskets of hawkers and in the station-houses. Nor are they proffered in vain: — old and young, women and men, — already provided, in nine cases out of ten, with a travelling provision against famine,—partake of them with a zeal and an intrepidity which, every time I witnessed it, recalled to me Petruchio's disdainful exclamation —

> "Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!"

and which take such various forms, that, within the compass of those four hours, a Cruickshank could easily find matter for a series of "Administrations of food."

Comfortable in beguiling the way as were these interludes, they were not precisely the best preparations for Dresden I could imagine. The Saxon capital, both on first sight and subsequent experience, has impressed me with a peculiar feeling not to be described, perhaps,

without the entertainer of it being considered Della Cruscan and fantastic: at least, not in work-a-day prose. Perhaps it may with less offence be intimated in a quatuorzain.

WRITTEN ON THE BRUHL TERRACE,
OCTOBER, 1840.

THERE hangs a tranquil and peculiar spell
O'er dome, and ample bridge, and rapid stream,
And dim fantastic palace, where the gleam
Of ghostly shapes, methinks, would glimmer well
At dead midnight. Autumn should ever dwell,
Rich, fading town, with thee! Here I could dream
Whole days away o'er some sweet solemn theme
Of mystic Fancy, careless how the bell
Of noisy Life importunately toll'd
Its children to their tasks. Aye, and such hours,
By some esteem'd more worthless than the flowers
Which drop in silence ere their bells unfold,
Show not our heaviest debt for wasted powers,
On Truth's eternal chronicle enroll'd!

Even the excitements of the far-famed Gallery, with its Madonna del Sisto, its Reading Magdalen, and its Christo della Moneta, where I lingered for two reverent hours every morning, till eye and mind could receive no more,

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could not neutralize the agreeable and soothing impression which the stately Saxon city produced on my mind. Of the ways of its people I know nothing beyond the universal report, which apportions to it a cheerful and cultivated society of refined intelligences. But I have never said in a town in which the idea of complete insulation brought with it so little of dreariness,—where so many thoughts and feelings and fancies seemed to rise up as companions. I can picture to myself no better residence for any one occupied in the absorbing task of imaginative creation: and, to push speculation one point further, I never passed the door of Tieck's house, in the Altmarkt, without feeling as if a certain harmony existed between his fantastic and spiritual tales and the city of his adoption. But this, perhaps, is food trifling. While, however, I cannot forget that my holidays in Dresden must be numbered among those times of rich acquisition to which the mind best loves to refer, I am not going to trespass on any one's patience by enumerating the treasures of the Gallery. Poets and paint-

ers have already expatiated upon these; one of the last and most eloquent of their chroniclers possessing in a rare degree the power of combining those cadences of style which tell of a harmonious mind and those thoughts which declare a searching but not a captious eye: I mean Mrs. Jameson. The curiosities, too, of the Rust Kammer and the Green Vaults, — of the collection of prints, and the huge assemblage of crockery and china of all Celestial epochs at the Japanese palace, have been counted over again and again in tour and guide-book. But the musical pleasures of Dresden are marked with "a white stone" in the calendar of my experiences, and not to be passed so summarily. There, on my visit in 1839, I first made acquaintance with the "Euryanthe" of Weber.

The practicability of quickening musical appetite by a legitimate country walk, taken ten minutes before entering a theatre, was a pleasant variety in my play-going experiences. Suffering, as I own to have done, under a fidget of impatience to hear a work I had so long ardently desired to hear—and my appetite

piqued to its keenest edge by the perpetual operatic disappointments I had been undergoing during my German progress,—I might have foreseen what the chimes told me just as I was leaving the beautiful Elbe-bridge for the space in front of the barn-like theatre*, namely, that I was three quarters of an hour too soon. Away, then, I strolled down through the Zwinger-gardens, along a solemn avenue of chestnut-trees, at the end of which stands a large orangery, and, turning through a court-yard, was directly in a *bona fide* meadow, stretching down to the placid Elbe, garnished with pollard trees, such as Paul Potter loved to paint, among

* Since my last visit to Dresden, the new and magnificent structure towering by the side of that meanest of all mean temples to the Drama has been opened. While I have been transcribing and arranging these journals for the press, it has been impossible to forbear being struck by the number of last things they register. And I have "laid the flattering unction to my soul" that they may not be utterly valueless, as improving a time of expectation by illustrating a period just closed. So many of the musical institutions mentioned in them are more than middle-aged, that it is impossible to regard the past without also adverting to the future.

which Paul Potter's comely cows were slowly going home to be milked; and divided by a brook—positively a brook, with stepping-stones. Perhaps sunset never made a lovelier picture of Dresden than on that evening. There was hardly an air to stir the leaves; smoke there was none to curl; and the sky, glowing with all the hues of gold and crimson and violet, made a festal pageant of the domes and spires rising beyond the Elbe-bridge. The beauty of the weather, and the rarity of such a pleasure (as Covent-garden Market and St. James's Park could testify to, had they tongues) by way of prelude to an act of play-going, tempted me to loiter to the last possible moment. And yet, after finding myself comfortably installed in my *sperrsitz*, I had still time to spare before the overture commenced, — time to say to myself, "Well, after all, poor Weber was perhaps better here than at Berlin!" I had been looking at the bright side of his Dresden residence, — the winning and picturesque beauty of its environs.

The cast which the peculiarly tidily-printed

zettel revealed to me was strong. Madame Schröder Devrient played the part of Euryanthe, and Herr Tichatschek that of the hero Adolar. She was acting with all the old power and pathos that earned for her in England the title of "the Queen of tears," and singing the terribly difficult music of the part with a force and freshness I found it totally impossible to account for, save on the hypothesis that some miracle had created her voice anew since she was last in London. My ear has not that singular decision which retains a memory of tone, independently of pitch — a positive faëry gift belonging to the highest order of musical organisations; and it did not occur to me that the cause of Madame Schröder Devrient's apparently renovated clearness and purity might lie in the flat diapason of the orchestra. It is so, however; the Dresden band being nearly half a tone lower than any I have ever heard. But this flatness threw over the whole performance of a powerful and brilliant orchestra, most carefully directed by Herr Reissiger, a languor which —knowing as I did the music well, and missing none of its points — puzzled me very nearly as

much as the restored juvenility of the *prima donna.*

Among the tenors of Germany, Herr Tichatschek bears a high reputation; and few, in any country, have ever crossed the stage with an ampler proportion of natural advantages. He is of the right height — handsome — his voice strong, sweet, and extensive, taking the *altissimo* notes of its register in chest tones. He possessed, too, in 1839, a youthful energy of manner calculated to gain the favour of all who hear and see him. But, on returning to Dresden in 1840, I found that he had abused this energy to the evident deterioration of his voice and style; and there was cause to fear that a few seasons more may rivet him in bad habits never to be thrown off, such as sink their owner among the disappointing legion of those who "might have done great things." I heard no one in Germany, however, who was better qualified to sustain the glorious music belonging to the part of Adolar.

The Dresden chorus I found clear, forcible, and paying the utmost German attention to light and shade — far more satisfactory, in short,

than the chorus of Berlin. Some of the *soprani*, however, had an intolerably metallic harshness of tone in the upper notes of their voices, which set my teeth on edge, and made me shiver whenever I felt a *sforzando* coming on. The defect was forced upon notice most especially in Weber's opera; but I recognised it again, last Autumn, in the slighter and more moderately composed music of "Masaniello." I think, too, that not even among our opera *figurantes* before Easter did I ever see such a regiment of ill-favoured women. Framed by them, Madame Schröder Devrient seemed to have recovered not only the bloom of her voice but also of her youthful graces. Yet more strikingly did their excessive uncomeliness (one year older) set off the expressive and dark features of Mademoiselle Anschutz, whom I saw, in 1840, play the mute part of Fenella to their Market and Fishermen's chorus. One is never so struck by the obtrusiveness of ugliness on the French stage. Intrinsically frightful enough, as the Graces know, are some not merely of the back-ground figures, but of the

principal personages who figure on the theatrical arenas of Paris; but, from Dejazet downwards, they contrive to turn awkwardness into grace, irregularity into piquancy, and Age itself "into favour and prettiness,"—by what spell, must remain a mystery which no familiarity can ever unravel to an English or a German inquirer.

But enough of these trifles and executive details, which, as the opera proceeded, broke upon me one by one in spite of the fascination exercised over me by its music. "Euryanthe" is too little known in England as yet. One day it must become familiar here, as the most remarkable expression of passion in Music which the lyric drama has hitherto possessed. Nothing short of some such transcendent excellence could have carried off a story so confused and incomprehensible as was furnished to poor Weber by way of text. It is difficult to understand what freak of prudery drove the German adaptors of the exquisite "Cymbeline" of Shakspeare so utterly to transform and distort and weaken its incidents. Why

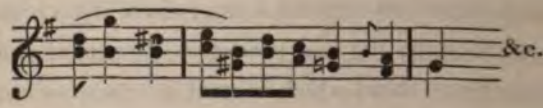
Lysiart, the boasting and malevolent Iachimo of the opera, should not of himself be sufficient to lie away the honour of its heroine, by way of winning his wager; — why Eglantine, the she-fiend associated with him, should bear such a mortal hatred to the heroine, — and how a ring stolen from a dead woman's tomb should be as damning a proof to Adolar of Euryanthe's infidelity as the original description of "the mole cinque-spotted," and the production of the ring from Imogen's own finger to the loyal Leonatus, — are puzzles which can hardly fail to engage all who ever condescend to seek for reality and coherence in a *libretto*. The impossibility of their solution, however, well nigh destroyed Weber's *chef-d'œuvre*, by making the work all but unintelligible. Most vexatious is it that another of the few first-rate operas which the German repertory possesses, the "Zauberflöte" of Mozart, should thus be dragged downwards by a foolish and entangled story. As regards "Euryanthe," I cannot but think that much might be done to simplify and to remodel, and would fain see the book in the

hands of some well-skilled but not over-arrogant dramatist.

Were I called upon to name the opera which has the most excited me, musically and not dramatically to speak, I should cite this same "Euryanthe." Years ago, when wandering aimlessly over the pianoforte score, and tantalised by indications of melody which then, owing to breaks of rhythm and strangenesses of harmony, I was unable to follow out or comprehend, I had been told (and Self-conceit had accepted the character as a truth) that the music was crude, incomprehensible, and far-fetched; and I had let it lie by, more unwilling at every new acquisition by straining my sympathies to spoil them. I hope it is not self-conceit of a worse kind which makes me now wonder where the difficulty and where the crudity of "Euryanthe" are gone. Some far-fetchedness there is: the rhythms are constructed on unusual forms; there is no prophesying, by the best-practised listener, of the change or chord which is next to come — but this is felt in closet study far more than in stage intercourse: while, on the other hand, for

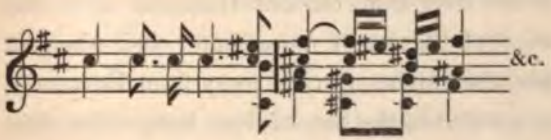
character, colour, melody, and the boldest ren
dering of the strongest emotions, whether o
tenderness, wonder, pity, passion, terror, ecstasy
or vengeance, I cannot but feel the music un
paragoned.

To justify this catalogue of attributes a little
I would fain call attention to the treatmen
of the chorus in the first scene, by way o
illustrating Weber's mastery over character an
colour. If a higher and more chivalrous strai
exists in Music than the antiphonic song o
knights and ladies which opens the story afte
the brilliant and stately overture has subsided
it has yet to be made public. Yet of what a
exquisite simplicity is Weber's chorus! There
is the joy of high-born youth and beauty i
every note of the stanza given to the *soprani*
a touch of tenderness nothing short of Shak
sperian in its close—



setting off in the happiest contrast the glo
rious burst of male voices which immediatel

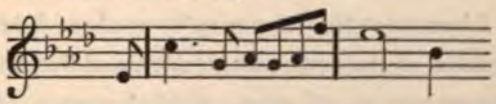
succeeds. In this the incidental shade of ruggedness, distinctive of the sex, —



— is hardly less masterly. How charming throughout, too, is the employment of the accompaniment, which ever and anon resumes its measures, gay and jubilant, but by no means such as could be mistaken for those of peasant gaiety or jubilee, — and, at length, flows broadly forth into a minuet of such a grave and ample grandeur, as to remind us of the "solemn dancing" which formed so important a part of all old court festivities.

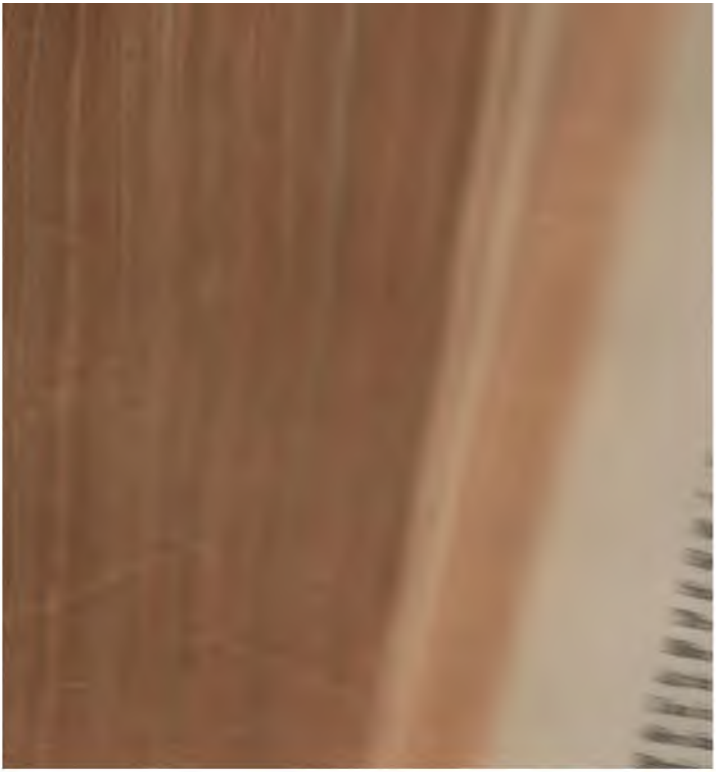
More marvellous, because it is more boldly loose of rhythm, and called forward to do more, is the use of the chorus in the second act: beginning with a flowing strain of knightly joy and homage; then, — as the false Iachimo of the opera contrives, by his base artifices, to blacken the fame of the heroine past the possibility of her explanation or excuse, — passing

this heroic stamp, — whether in the scene where he throws down his gage to the asperser of Euryanthe's honour when he repeats the martial subject of the earlier part of the overture, — or whether when, in his song of expectation in the second act, he gives — because he is alone — a broader vent to his manly rapture in that delicious second melody,



which, also, has been wrought into the prelude of the drama, and prepares the hearer for a love-story of engrossing depth and passion, or Music has no meaning.

I cannot recall a more delicious example of calm succeeding excitement, than follows the challenge scene I have already mentioned in Euryanthe's *entrata*, "Glöklein im Thale." Here, especially, no pianoforte arrangement can give the slightest idea of the exquisite orchestral effect caused by the simple alternation of the stringed and wind instruments, and the happy use of the searching and voluptuous



and is the expression of the second change of the character — from tranquil but most tender recollection to delight in the approach of reunion. From this point the part is conducted to its close with a rare vividness and brilliancy. But while it embraces the extremes of rapture and despair, its passion is saved from monotony by the exquisite variety and closeness with which sound is adapted to sense. For instance, — though excitement can hardly speak plainer in Music than in both pieces, — how totally and admirably different is the sentiment of the duet in the second act,

" Hin nimm die seele mein," *

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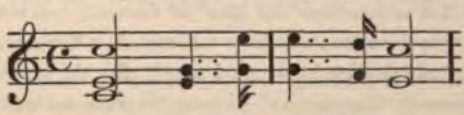
* In the main phrase of this most effective composition,



it would almost seem as if Weber had borrowed his *motivo* from " Il Tancredi " of Rossini. But if the harshest construction is to be put upon coincidence, the plagiarism is amply atoned for by the grace, variety, and intense expression of the second part; — how different from the mechanical braying of trumpets and beating of drums with which Italian composers, in their idleness or

from that of the *allegro* to the grand *scena* in the third act! where the delirious intensity of longing, quickened by a gleam of hope, rises to a height of intermingled ecstasy and pain — of panting suspense and anxious anticipation striving for utterance, with a force which must hurry the speaker onward to death or madness. As an example of rhythm capriciously broken for the production of the most exciting effects, I know of nothing like that air; — especially when, by the entrance of the supporting chorus, on the return of the theme, its irregularity is brought into a clearer light.* The close of

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their incompetence, never fail to fill up the blank between the first enunciation of a theme and its repetition!

* Not to interrupt the flow of fantastic speculation, or to become unnecessarily tedious, I will spare the reader the passage in which I noted, after the lights, the shadows of "Euryanthe;"—I mean the black and villanous characters of Eglantine and Lysiart. The latter is, musically, as splendid a creation as the hero and heroine. His duet with Eglantine, at the opening of the second act, and all his morsels of *solo* in the grand concerted pieces, rise to the highest point in the expression of evil passion and duplicity. His comrade in guilt is less intelligible, in spite of the care with which Weber has

the scene, too, when the singer sinks exhausted by her emotion, and the voices of the rough hunters, who bear her away on a litter of boughs and leaves, die away into a grave and melancholy silence, is in the highest strain of picturesque invention. O! had Weber but been intrusted with such a situation and such poetry as occur in the original play, where the rudely-nurtured princes, bending over the dead body of Fidele,

> . . . . " the bird
> Whom they had made so much of,"

pour out their sorrow in the most deeply mournful and artlessly manly of all dirges, — delicate as the air, but rurally homely as the cavern and the trees to whose echoes it was sung, — what music might he not have written! To Beethoven of right belong the Lears, and the Othellos, and the Macbeths of Shakspeare; and

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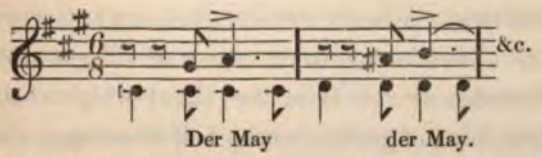
labelled her with a peculiarly significant and serpentine phrase. She is as much a *walking* Fury, and, thus, as superfluous to the interest the story excites, as is the walking lover or the walking (and very moral) father of sentimental comedy.

I am heretic enough to lament that his giganti genius did not engage itself in the illustration o some of those creations of our immortal poet — if illustrated they must be in Music; — but t Weber, such dramas of romantic fantasy as th "Winter's Tale," "Cymbeline," and "Th Tempest." He was, what Hogg delighted t call himself, "the king of the mountain and faëry school." With all his wondrous novelty and invention of means, his is music in spirit belonging to an olden time, when there were omens whispered in the woods, and battles fore-told by the blood-red phantoms that brandished their arms and waved their banners in the West. The fancy of it is not untinctured with superstition; the hue upon it is either the pearly light o Dream-land, or that gorgeous tint which streams through some blazoned window garnished "with many a quaint device!"

I could write for a volume, and still leav untold the thousand associations and fantasie awakened by this most fascinating composer and which crowded round me at Dresden, as sat listening to the "Euryanthe," so as mar-

vellously to put out of court for the moment "those prosaic temporalities"—Time and Place. They followed me home across the Elbe-bridge; they mixed themselves up in my dreams: no bad preparation for a two days' ramble into that most rare and peculiar passage of scenery of any I am acquainted with — Saxon Switzerland and the Elbe valley. And I got into a little carriage I had hired for the journey, at six o'clock on the following morning, to the tune of



Indeed, the sunshine was so glorious and the air so exquisitely balmy, that, but for the yellow leaves, I could easily have cheated myself into fancying that the flower-month was come again.

The environs of Dresden are beautiful: the suburban houses show more marks of a refined taste in floriculture than I have elsewhere seen in Germany. The road rises gently; and the city, seen as I beheld it,—with the mist of early day

wreathing the beehive-like dome of Our Lady' Church and the spires round it, and the Elb below and behind the bridge lying under a mantle of deep empurpled shadow, — makes a fair a town-picture as one of those splendid clusters of Italian architecture which Gaspar Poussin loved to build in his landscapes. As we advance further, the banks of the Elbe are striped and dotted with vineyards, among which the rough road winds; almost every half mile curving so as to pass through or escape some of the clean red-roofed *witz*-es (*witz* being as favourite a termination to the names of villages near Dresden as *rode* is in the Harz) which, half composed of garden-houses, half of cottages, are as tempting nooks as poet or musician could retreat to for summer residence. Tottering over the road, like the last tower of a broken-down fortress, and clinging to the wall, which keeps the soil up to the roots of the vines, a tiny closet is shown, where Schiller wrote his "Don Carlos." Another little mansion — but a modest one even for a house in a German *weinberg* — saw the birth of Weber's "Oberon." This last is

about half-way betwixt the beautiful city and that wild and elvish district, where gigantic rocks, of every menacing and capricious form, strangely overlean the Elbe, and seem to tell of some such miracle performed in the days of "the good people" as was wrought by him who

. . . . "cleft Eildon hills in three."

I gazed wistfully at the cabinets where the poet and musician had carried on their alchemy; but more, I confess, to possess myself of a distinct impression of their aspect, than with that intense enthusiasm some enjoy on all due occasions: — happy in having feelings like chimes, which cannot fail to answer to the touch, whoseever hand it be that puts down the key. Yet it was impossible, even then and there, not to be alive to the influences which such a picturesquely-placed habitation might have exercised over one whom I have always fancied to have been largely acted upon by the sights and sounds of Nature. In another point of view, however, on regarding them from a distance, the environs of Dresden seem to me less friendly

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like Sir C—— W——'s which never knew what braces meant;—a watch in each fob (in the exploded *macaroni* fashion), and long, long *queues*, those simplest of all symbols of etiquette. There might be seen stately and substantial ladies, decorated in all the German *grandezza* which so amused Bettina when Goethe's mother dressed herself to receive Madame de Stäel. There might be smelt the miscellaneously arranged odours of things savoury and things sweet which distinguish a German dinner. There might be heard (O shame to a music-loving family* like the Royalties of Saxony !), among

* One of the pleasantest passages in Dr. Burney's "Musical Tour in Germany" describes the visit he paid Nymphenburg (a palace three miles from Munich), where he was presented to the Electress Dowager of Saxony, whose opera of "Talestri" was then on the point of being performed at the Bavarian Court. Her brother, the Elector, too, was a fair player on the *viol da gamba*. And the Doctor speaks in high strains of his performance, as well as of the style of the Dowager's singing, which had been taught her by Porpora. After an evening spent in the interchange of musical conversation, when his Highness and the court supped in the same great hall and public manner in which they had dined, "I went," says

I confess, whenever I reflect upon such an appropriation of the services of Genius as this, — when I think of the "Concert-Stück" destroyed by the stirring of a salad, or the exquisite Sonata in A flat, Op. 39., being lost in the midst of the discussion of those mighty puddings in which a German cook excels, — the corruption of Radicalism rises strong within me. I verily believe, had I known the nature of the duty which the position of Weber at Dresden demanded from him, while I was in the full glow of enthusiasm consequent on the enjoyment of "Euryanthe," I must have shaken the dust of Pillnitz from my feet, with something of a bitter and disdainful feeling, instead of turning round and admiring the fine but heavy composition (to use the painter's jargon) it made between two magnificently embrowned chestnut trees, ere a sudden bend in the road to Löhmen hid it from my sight.

CHAP. II.

[illegible]

Characteristics of the Organ.—Visit to Herr Schneider.—Inaccessibility of the Dresden Houses.—"In the body and out of the body."—The Sophien-Kirche.—Its Interest.—The Organ by Silbermann.—Its Sweetness of Tone.—Herr Schneider's Performance.—Bach's Fugues.—Improvisation.—Moral of the Instrument.—Sunday Morning Service.—Oratio.—Admirable Accompaniment.—Henry Isle.—Catholic Church.—Cremona Violins.—Another Silbermann Organ.—Flatness of Diapasons.—Marbach's Music.—Picturesque Group.—Artificial Sorrow.—A Sabbath Thought in Dresden.

I LIKED Dresden even better on my second than on my first visit. The weather was brighter,—the town seemed more tranquilly engaging; and the pictures in the Gallery had taken the look of old familiar friends. Dresden, too, is doomed to be a place of musical compensation for failures and disappointments encountered elsewhere. The repayment for Berlin shortcomings, which, in 1839, I found in my first introduction to "Euryanthe," took, in 1840, a form more precious—if that could be—because more unique, by bringing me acquainted

with the consummate organ-playing of Herr Schneider.

I will not libel any musician by asking him if he be fond of the instrument. The further removed he be from personality in his preferences of Art — the more devotedly addicted to Thought in its noblest, if not most excursive, flights, — the more exquisitely will he relish, the more eagerly return to those grave and sublime pleasures — to those oracular utterances, as it were, in which musical Truth and Poetry, of the highest order, make themselves known. After a London season of fever and competition and excitement, when the newest wonder-player has been hardly heard before he has been pushed off his stool of popularity by the newest singer, — when one strain of music has been hurried out of the memory by some other of a more seizing piquancy, — to find in the midst of the comparative quiet of a German town, and the yet more modest tranquillity of an occupied but not a dazzling career, an instrumentalist who, in his way, might challenge the Liszts and the Paganinis of his

century,—was as great a gratification to the mind as his artistic exhibitions were a delight to the ear. And to me the gratification was doubled, inasmuch as it came by way of sequel to the traces of Bach I had been exploring at Leipsic.

The weariness which the paltry "Die Beiden Schützen" of Lortzing, at the Opera House, had left upon my spirits, was only half effaced by a long morning among the Venetian pictures in the Gallery: when, as I was sitting at dinner, on a certain Saturday, a promised note of introduction was handed to me, which privileged me to present myself at Herr Schneider's door. By the way, this simple ceremony is by no means so easily to be performed at Dresden as elsewhere. In no town that I have ever visited is it so difficult to find out your acquaintances. Bells are scarce; door-plates, as far as I could see, utterly unknown. The first floor knoweth nothing of the cunning of the second—especially when the latter is inquired for in bad English-German; and in every house I approached,—to judge from the silence

and impenetrability and difficulty of access which prevailed, — the inhabitants might, one and all, have been suffering under an epidemic dun-*phobia*. To the third story, however, of the mansion where Herr Schneider carries on his own studies and directs those of others, I was guided by the full chord of many voices; and, for the one only time in Dresden, I found him whom I came to seek without that running to and fro, and that hesitation of servants, which take so much of its edge off the pleasure of a first visit.

I remember a story of a Swedenborgian who, on meeting a stranger, suddenly exclaimed, "I have seen you before, but whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell." This address I could have echoed on presenting my credentials to Herr Schneider. I had seen him "out of the body" years ago, during the whole time when I was occupying myself in tracing the imagined character of a German organist, in a forgotten book; — and his simple and hearty welcome, and his homely and intelligent features, on which a smile sits more at its ease than on many countenances far more regularly agreeable, —

in short, the appearance, air, and *abord* (as the French say) of the man, had the welcome familiarity of old acquaintanceship. It was late in the day when I paid my visit; and he had been occupied among his musical avocations since the lark's hour of rising. But when I told him how short the duration of my stay in Dresden must be; he sent for the keys of the church and the bellows-blower, as if he was doing the most natural thing instead of the greatest favour imaginable, — without any superfluous words between us. Indeed, profuse thanks would have suited ill with his hearty plainness of manner. And we were out of the house, and on the road to one of the rarest musical pleasures I ever enjoyed, as if we had known one another "in the body" for years, within ten minutes of his breaking the seal of ———'s friendly letter.

The Sophien-Kirche, or Evangelical Church, which we reached after passing down two or three of the dark and narrow streets in which Dresden abounds, is one of those bleak and melancholy Lutheran buildings where the destroyer and the image-breaker have left their

visible traces. It once belonged to a Franciscan convent; and a superbly enriched portal, opening upon the Kloster Platz, remains to tell what the rest of the building has been. Its interior aspect is yet more fragmentary, and clearly indicative of sack and plunder. The church is supported by a double row of columns, with a large and irregular gallery stretching round one half of it. The vault and pillars are debased by parsimonious whitewash: a few birdcage-like pews are hung up and down on its high walls: it has a few quaint old pictures, a mouldering monument or so, surmounted by a crucifix; and the same papistical symbol above the dingy *rococo* of the high altar. The fading of daylight gave these objects that sad and sombre hue which Time has imparted to more than one picture, where a like assemblage has been combined by Weenix or some other such painter of interiors. There was something, too, in the reverberation of our feet, as we went up the gallery stairs, which said more to my fancy than it would be at all discreet to print. The best got-up scene could not have been made so ap-

propriate for the music of meditation — which organ-music is.

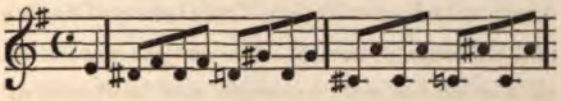
Herr Schneider's instrument stands in a corner of the gallery, clad in a white case with silvered pipes, and decked out with a quantity of *rococo* gilt garlands. It has only two keyboards, each four octaves and a half, in visible register; thirty-four stops; and a long pedalboard, nearly as well worn as St. Peter's toe in the Vatican. The voice proceeding from the first handful of keys put down, informed me of the neighbourhood of something surpassing after its kind. This is one of the great Silbermann's organs; and never heard I pipes of such a ripe and fascinating sweetness of tone, from the lowest *elephant* pedal C to the *skylark* C *altissimo;* — no hissing, no wheezing, no lumbering, no growling, — none of that ferocity of sound which makes some of our famous English specimens surgical to the ear. Compared, indeed, with aught in modern organ-building, the Silbermann instruments, at Dresden, are what the sumptuous ruby glass of the Middle Ages is to the ripest-

red piece of new Bohemian manufacture. Only a few weeks before I had been listening to our own noble organs at Christchurch in London, and in the Town-hall at Birmingham. A few weeks afterwards I was admiring a magnificent musical structure in progress of erection in the Westminster Abbey of the French — the cathedral at St. Denis. So that I was not without some opportunity of comparison, to warrant me in simile-making: and it is to be remembered that, as regards tone, the difference between player and player is little to be felt in the case of the instrument in question.

But in all that regards hand, and foot, and mind, — firmness of the first, brilliancy of the second, and concentration of the third, — Herr Schneider is to me as unrivalled as his organ. Drawing out a dear shabby old book from his depository, he asked me to choose which of Bach's grand fugues he was to play me; and, almost ere I could mention those with which I was most familiar, had begun to add to my treasure by opening one, in B minor, I had never heard before. I have been warned, again and again,

during the progress of transcribing these pag
that a written account of musical execution
likely to be as barren of fruit as the dancin
lessons which the country school-mistress d
rected from a book with mathematical diagram
but I must, once again, disregard the warnin
as far as insisting upon the union of power an
quietness which characterised Herr Schneider
performance. Those who treat organ-playin
as "a black business," to which they bend then
selves with frowning brows, and coat-sleeve
turned up half-way to the shoulders,—the scho
of kickers, and swingers to and fro, who mak
much exertion cover up very little skill,—migh
have taken a lesson from this admirable artis
whose hands, as they glided away over the key
("*worked away*" is the established phrase), wer
bringing out into their fullest glory all thos
magnificent chains of sound,—all those replies
and suspenses, and accumulations, which, wit
a calm but never-tiring munificence, the nobl
old Cantor of the Thomas-Schule has lavishe
in his compositions. Perhaps a finer specime
of these does not exist than in the fugue i

E minor, with which Herr Schneider next indulged me; where the subject,



spreading in form like a wedge, offers such excellent scope for the amplification of science and the arrangement of climax. I withdrew to the further corner of the gallery, where twilight was now fast sinking; and, while listening to this marvellous performance, lost the personality both of composer and the performer, more completely, perhaps, than I have ever done. It was neither Bach nor Schneider: the building was filled, to running over, with august and stately Music; and the old childish feeling of mystery and delight which, in the days when I was sparingly admitted to the acquaintanceship of any instrument whatsoever, the gigantic sounds of the organ used to awaken in me, came back as if I had been only —— years old.

After one or two more glorious displays of entire mastery over the key and pedal-board,—"It is too dark for us to see any more of Bach,"

said my liberal host; "so you must excuse what I am going to do:" and, with that, struck off at once into an improvisation of rare beauty of figure, and affluence of device. The subject was not at all a recondite one; — simple and bold, and at first I fancied a little drily treated: what, indeed, is there that would not sound so after the unfoldings of Bach? But, whether the admirable artist was excited by the keen relish I showed, or whether it is the nature of such powers as his to sustain and to excite themselves,—as he went on, the depth of his science was surpassed by the brilliancy of his fancy. It was the work of one hand to draw and close the stops which were wanted by the play of his imagination: a matter, of course, in which he could receive no help. But he ministered to himself with such a wonderful promptness and agility of finger, that the changes of hand from the key-board to the register were never felt; while so subtly were they combined and alternated, as to be totally clear of producing that piecemeal effect in which the fantasy-work of common organists so often ends, from a want of

a like judgment in combination. Till then, the remarkable mental energy demanded for an exhibition like this never struck me in all its fulness. And yet, not only must the performer originate thoughts, but, by new and happily-successive admixtures, contrive effects totally, of course, beyond the reach of him who has only before him the plain and immovable keys of a piano-forte. Taken merely in its most matter-of-fact sense, as a display which proved nothing, here were memory, combination, promptitude, invention, and mechanical skill, united. I may be laughed at, but I could not help imagining that the exercise of a power at once implying thought, self-mastery, and a patient use of physical strength, could hardly have been carried to so high a perfection without its favourable moral influences; and that if it were so, herein, and not from their being erected in churches, might lie the superior sacredness of organs beyond other instruments — herein the holiness of the performance of the music written for them. By the time that Herr Schneider had brought his improvisation to a close, I could

hardly distinguish either himself or organ from among the mass of gloomy shadows that had fallen round me; and I left the church in that pleasantly thoughtful state which suits so well with Dresden, and in which there is rest and not excitement. Lights were gleaming up and down in the windows of the high houses surrounding the Neumarkt: here and there a solitary foot-fall was to be heard, the sounds of daily traffic being for the most part over.

At nine precisely on the following morning I was again at Herr Schneider's elbow, in the organ-loft of the Sophien-Kirche, anxious to bear him company through the services of the morning. He had warned me that the plain forms of Lutheran worship forbade his exercising his craft with any thing like fantasy; but I would not have exchanged what I did hear for the most elaborate performance which hands and feet in concord could have completed. Before the service commenced to an ample congregation, he treated us to a brief prelude on the full organ, of great majesty and brilliancy, as clear in design and as symmetrical in

elaboration as though it were an *impromptu fait à loisir*. Then, while accompanying the psalms — five or six of which were most admirably sung by a choir of eighteen boys and young men — the extent of resource brought by him to bear on a prosaic and inferior task (as a second-rate player might choose to esteem it) was to me little less astonishing than the force he had shown in mastering the difficulties of Bach. The interludes between the verses were substantially and solidly dignified, yet sufficiently rich in ideas to set up for a twelvemonth some of the renowned improvisers I have heard; while the artful and unexpected management of the stops, so as to produce every variety of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, entirely precluded the occupation of the swell. Though I stood close by, I was unable, from a want of familiarity with the manipulations of the instrument, and the rapidity with which the changes were executed, to take any note of the successions and mixtures of stops employed. *Receipts* in such a matter are of little use to the half-taught, and none to the full-grown, artist.

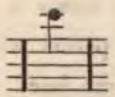
Between the *corales*, which, thus sung and thus accompanied, I would fain have crystallised for the benefit of all English choirs (could the miracle of the tunes frozen in Munchausen's horn be repeated), I confess myself to have been busier in turning over the venerable and well-thumbed music-books, and gathering what I could from their pages, than in trying to translate the drowsy and not very clear accents of the *pfarrer* into a service I could follow. There is much to be said some future day about these German psalm-tunes: a store of pleasant anecdote belongs to them. One of the most beautiful, for instance, that I heard that morning — Nun ruhen alle Wälder — had been in its early days as secular a melody as "Rousseau's Dream." It was the composition (so M. Mainzer had informed me in his amusing "Esquisses Musicales") of the famous Henry Isak, on the occasion of his being summoned from Inspruck to Munich three hundred years ago — a farewell tune, which got into every German mouth, and was seized hold of by the Reformers, on Rowland Hill's principles of turning profane

music to good account. Harmonised, and finely sung by many voices, as I heard it, it seemed unfit for any service save that of the Temple. Other of the tunes were by Herman, Pretorius, Crüger, Dr. Martin Luther himself; and in many antiphonal parts of the service the Ambrosian and Gregorian chaunts seemed to have been retained, as well as the popish crucifix and candles on the altar.

Without any levity intended, the traveller may be of all musical religions in Dresden without the slightest discomfort; for the order of divine worship admits of his participating in the Catholic services at the Court church after the Lutheran church has poured out its congregation. The two buildings stand as near to each other as their spirit is widely apart. Each, however, has its Silbermann organ. There is a third in the Frauen-Kirche (the most theatrical-looking church I ever entered), which I did not hear, the Catholic instrument being reputed as the finest. The musical services in which it bears a part have high repute among the tourists. I had been told to listen to some

Cremona violins in the orchestra, of a singular perfection of tone: I had been warned, too, that the choir contained a pair of those happily obsolete curiosities which were the consequence of the Romish prohibition of female assistance in the service of the Mass. The Catholic church, though its interior has a somewhat waste air from the absence of gilding and pictorial ornament, is a spacious and handsome edifice. The nave was crowded with the congregation — the men on the one side, on the other the women. Some of the royal family were to be seen from their tribune overlooking the altar: and there were the tinkling bells, and the incense-clouds, and the gorgeously-clad priests, — which, I am free to confess, in place of offending me as the "mummery" which stern Protestant travellers seem to think it a point of conscience to account them, never fail to quicken my papistical sympathies by striking the imagination, without, I would fain hope, spoiling the heart. But the reverberation in the building is so great, that the organ, though most cleverly played by Herr Kleugel, and a thorough Silbermann in

its silver-sweet tones, did not assert its superiority over its kinsman I had just been hearing. The sweetness, again, of the Cremona violins, led by Lipinski (who ranks high, as we Londoners know), was largely impaired to my ear by the flatness of their pitch, which, a twelvemonth before, had tempted me to believe in the rejuvenescence of Madame Schröder Devrient's



The tone of the orchestra sounded mawkish, independently of the intrinsic savourlessness of the Mass which it was performing — a *fade* composition by Morlacchi. What a sickly contrast to those stout old Lutheran tunes! As we were going up to the music gallery, a child with long German hair, and in a dark palmer-like cloak, came up to my kind *cicerone*, and, putting its little hand in his, trotted on by his side a little way: — precisely the figure which the neo-Catholic painters dress in a surplice, and arm with a branch of lilies, in some sacred picture: precisely the figure, too, to

set off my honest and kind-hearted conductor; and as the sun fell upon them through a window-slit, as they were mounting the massive greystone staircase to the music gallery, I thought I had never seen a more engaging picture. The little door was thrown open which was to admit me to a place among the fiddles and drums. While my foot was as yet on the threshold, out came a long-drawn sound — parcel squeak, parcel warble — which had well nigh driven me back with disgust at its shrillness and its falsity, — and shock at its disproportion to the six-feet-high and substantial tenement whence it issued. In its days of perfection, however, I could have fancied it possessed that subtle union of piercing and oily tone which distinguishes an oboe; and, bad as it was, — and bad as was the second *soprano*, of like quality, which went along with it, — I could readily conceive that there might lie in its use peculiarities of effect which can be produced by no other vocal organs. But even this conviction, honestly stated in despite of antipathy, could not reconcile me to the far-famed

music of the Catholic church in Dresden. There is decrepitude in it: the feebleness of old age without its venerable aspect. An instrumental symphony performed in one portion of the service was little newer in its forms than if Hullmandel or Graun had devised it. Somehow or other, the Italian style, whether in composition or performance—in church or opera—becomes to me intolerable in Germany. And, in spite of the report of tourist upon tourist, and enthusiast after enthusiast, I cannot invite any lover of what is genuine or individual to attend High Mass with the hope of finding his reverential feelings quickened by the offerings of Art.

He had better, if he would keep the devout feelings which the massive congregational singing in the Evangelical Church is calculated to inspire, give himself up to an hour of silent meditation before the Madonna di San Sisto in the gallery:—at least, I know that her holy and spiritual smile bore me company along my favourite walk on the Brühl Terrace, in the quiet half hour which elapsed between my gratefully

NOTES

ON

NUREMBURG.

NOTES

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Frankfort to Nuremburg.— Fellow Travellers.— A young Actress. — Her Airs and Graces. — Dettingen. — Aschaffenburg. — Autumn in the Forest of Spessart.— The Conquest achieved. — Victor Hugo and French Rhythms. — Midnight at Wurzburg. — Breakfast at Emskirchen. — Wretched Inn. — Nuremburg. — First Impressions.— The Bayerische-Hof. — A Family House and its Motto. — Church of St. Lawrence. — Its Treasures of Art. — Relics of Catholicism. — Ancestral Pride. — The Frauen-Kirche. — The Burg. — The Joannes Kirch-hof. — Martin Ketzel's Seven Stations. — Stately Burial Ground. — The Tombs. — Walk home. — Nuremburg Theatre. — Scraps of Musical Anecdotage.—Paulmann.—The Gerls.— Meuschel.— Denner. — Modern Music discordant in Nuremburg.— Church of St. Sebald.— Rauch's Statue of Albert Durer. — Peter Visscher's Shrine of St. Sebald. — Votive Picture. — The Tucher Light. — Endowments. — The Moritz Kapelle.— The Rath-haus.— The Dole.—Group of old Men.— Münzer's Picture.— The Council Chamber.— Portraits of the Patricians. — Organ Music. —

man and lady, whose kissings and leave-takings outnumbered all that I ever witnessed in that land of kissing and leave-taking;—an old woman, whose wrinkled features, and grey hair combed back beneath a brown bonnet with a few scraps of pale canary-coloured ribbon to garnish it, made a better Denner than any of the pictures by that microscopic master in the Dresden Gallery;—and a very handsome boy, fresh from Bonn, whose finely-turned throat, and thick waving hair, and deep eyes, and well-cut lips might have been *studied* to good advantage by any one wanting a head of Hylas. His long pipe, and his nondescript walking-stick, and his violin case, were all arranged; and we were at last fairly on the road, jingling down the fine poplar avenue which leads to the clean and pleasant town of Hanau.

I have not oftener been more amused than with my *vis-à-vis* — the young lady. It was impossible to be long in doubt as to her vocation. Talking as much by the sprightly pantomime of her hands as by her sprightly tongue, — very pretty, but rather haggard, — her neatly kept

[illegible] ready for any emergency.—I should, in any case, have recognized her as theatrical, had not [illegible] and hearty farewell messages, uttered in the midst of that volley of salutes and embraces [illegible] by and from her, put her connection with the profession past doubt. Never was any one on better terms with herself and her bonnet. The latter, a splendid construction of fine plush, and [illegible], was notable enough to have played a part in the capital bargaining [illegible] between the American girls which was overheard and reported by Captain Murryat. And its owner took it off, told what it cost, caressed its bows, and smoothed its strings, with a pride of possession, one half, at least, of which was artless. Before we had travelled ten minutes, she had made friends with every one—even the Denner, who was propitiated, by the offering of a pear, to overlook her airs and graces with a motherly forbearance and a wintry smile. For myself, though engaged over Victor Hugo's "Les Rayons et les Ombres," having just stumbled upon his "Guitarre"—

"Gastilbelza, l'homme à la carabine,
Chantait ainsi,"—

which got hold of me, with all the strong charm of a vivid simple ballad, — it was impossible not to be distracted by my neighbour's "varieties." These, as Master Mace says of the changes of the old harpsichord he wished to sell, were "exceeding pleasant." Her mind was set upon subduing the youth who sat by me. It was a very arduous task. Not that the boy was too bashful, or too innocent, or too silent, or too rude; — I have rarely travelled with a better-nurtured or more intelligent companion. Neither was he preoccupied by any one else: — he had no braided *beitel* for his tobacco — no hair-ring on the fore-finger which does such hard and foul service in the pipes of Young Germany — he was perfectly willing to contribute his share of conversation to reciprocate pleasantries, but in a quiet, sensible, cousinly way. That was not what she wanted. First, as I have said, having taken off her notable plush bonnet, she arranged her hair curl by curl, he looking on — an operation which elicited

no warmer response on his part than a calculation of the probable length of our ride, followed by the eternal permission asked to smoke a cigar. "Certainly;—she was fond of tobacco—she preferred it to any perfumes — would he let her see what sort he smoked?" "*Gewiss*," was his calm reply, and the contents of the cigar-case were tumbled out on her lap. Then she began, with gesture conformable, to narrate all manner of *piquant* stories about herself and her journeys, and the pleasant company it had always been her good hap to find; — shaking the Denner woman's hand, that she might not feel herself omitted in the compliment. To this the youth (was ever Cymon so inapprehensive?) replied by mutual confidences, — talked to her of his elder brother, and his uncle!! That was a hopeless bait, obviously. Presently, she thought fit to go to sleep, arranging one little round cheek on her pretty hand, so that the other should be lightly shaded by her shining hair, in the perfection of that attitude so often attempted upon the green sofa which the liveried myrmidons of the Stage wheel in to all manner of rural scenes

for heroines and other sentimental persons to slumber upon. I am ashamed of my sex when I have to say that, in reply to this bewitching measure, Hylas fairly followed her example, and fell, in very audible truth, asleep! In another moment her eyes were as wide open and as wakeful as a bird's. I gave up the game for lost, though I might have known the universal woman and the German man better.

These schemes and stratagems consumed the best part of the journey betwixt Hanau and Aschaffenburg. To reach the latter, a wide plain and a wretched village are to be passed—the plain and the village of Dettingen. Perhaps some lovers of music will understand me when I say, that, entering the latter, I felt a momentary twinge of disappointment, as if the post-horn of the *schwager*, instead of its eternal ditty, could, indeed, have been expected to give out those simple but most pompous trumpet notes by which Handel, in the opening of his grandest "Te Deum," has given the place a "local habitation and a name" to many a *fanatico* who never knew the names of the commanders of

the Allies and of the French in the victory of 1743,—or what they fought about! I had not been prepared for the picturesque appearance of Aschaffenburg, which lies pleasantly along and above the Main;—in its aspect the most southern place I have yet seen, with its rich and fantastic palace flanked by four picturesque square towers, and its crops of maize hanging against the walls to dry. The sun—a rare guest for the last six weeks—was out, so that the fair landscape which surrounds the town could not have been seen to better advantage. The stages on immediately quitting it are yet more striking. There are hamlets nestling low down in the valley on the right of the road, every one of which, with its red-roofed houses hidden among fruit-trees, makes its own picture; while the companies of women who sate, gossipping and beating flax by the road side, however ugly, were anything but despicable as foreground figures. There was an autumn glory of crimson and orange and pale gold upon the woods of the forest of Spessart, which an American wilderness in an Indian summer could

hardly have exceeded. The air was diamond-clear, and perfectly silent—save when the echoes were startled by the violent and sonorous reports of the postilion's whip, as he urged his horses up the long hills.

It was delightful to emancipate one's self from the fusty atmosphere of the schnellpost, by no means the better for the odours of tobacco and of strong food: and a steep ascent gave us half an hour's walk. During this, the maiden of the plush-bonnet did her best to create a movement in her favour, by feigning pretty fears of banditti and gipsies in so lonely a place, and by uttering many appeals to the gallantry of the young student, "who, she hoped, should any adventure happen, would take care of her." But he assured her she need not be afraid: his uncle came that road four times a year, and had never met any one:—they were all good simple people in those parts. Fairly worn out by such a perverse obduracy, she turned to me, and was presently chattering as gaily about the theatrical gossip of Munich, her native town, — about Madame Mink, and

Kapellmeister Lachner, and *Solo-tanzerinn* this, and her dear friend *Schauspielerinn* the other—and kind King Louis above all,—as if her steadfast design had been utterly relinquished. It was not so, however. The air of the Spessart is keen; and the road-side *stube* at Aschaffenburg, into which we had been invited for refection by a dirty toad-complexioned old crone, had promised "eye of newt and toe of frog," rather than good coffee or clean bread. None of us durst partake of these refreshments, so that the party were by this time all rather hungry. On remounting the vehicle, a general rummage for eatables began. The maiden dived into a huge tapestry-wrought sack of miscellanies, which might have victualled the Ark for a day: Hylas meanwhile drawing upon his pocket for a more modest packet of cold meat and bread, which had kept his cigars close and loving company. Not a moment was to be lost. With a smile of welcome and good-will not to be resisted, she produced a couple of huge sandwiches, filled with most savoury *wurst*. The boy's eyes glistened as she merrily thrust them

into his hands, with a promise of more when they were despatched. In another instant his mouth was full. The ice was fairly broken for ever! All the rest of the journey, he paid suit and service to the full heart's content of his admirer; and the last glimpse I had of the pair was their disappearance into The Strauss at Nuremburg, — the youth with reverent care carrying the basket which had produced a result so long denied and so desirable.

It was well that I had Victor Hugo's volume to fall back upon, and bethought myself of trying that method of improving time recommended by Lintot to Pope when the two rode together to Oxford. The "*Guitarre*," as the great French author somewhat affectedly calls his Spanish ballad of the "homme à la carabine," had so possessed my fancy, that, as night fell, a set of English rhymes began to arrange themselves in my mind, in imitation of the original. Till I made this first essay at paraphrasing French verses, the peculiarities of the national rhythm had never been sufficiently taken into account in considering the charac-

calls for no ordinary share of selection and science in its arrangement. At least, they will not doubt how far the fatal sweetness of the Italian tongue has tended to the dilution of sense in its rhymes, and, consequently, meaning in its melodies. Example succeeded example, and *romance* and *canzone* became confused with the half-formed English and half-remembered French lines, till all clearness and coherence of speculation were lost, and I was fain to adjourn a cause not sufficiently studied by those who write upon and those who write for Music till another day. How long I had slept on this interesting question it would be hard to tell. My last waking remembrance was the crossing of the ferry at Lengfurth, with the lights of the village twinkling in the Main, and that murmuring sound of a weir which is so lulling when all is dark. It was midnight when I was wakened up, on our entering Wurzburg, by the hollow sound of the wheels, as they wound between the high walls of the houses and rolled over the bridge. At such a dead hour, and to one in the feverish half-surprised state which succeeds

schnellpost. The meal had given me an opportunity to take note of the lady of the *coupè*, who proved subsequently to be a Vienna milliner, on her way from Paris with the newest modes for Princess Schwartzenberg, and Princess Wasa, and others of the *crême*. A more thorough compound of animal luxury, professional pomposity, and knowing management, never set forth on a journey — nor one much less pleasing in aspect. Eyes tender if not sore, a blue beard on her upper lip, and cheeks not guiltless of rouge, made up the principal features of the picture. She was weary of the company of the *herr* with the placket; and, as the *frau* Denner had left us at Esselbach, proposed to succeed to her corner in the *interieur*. The little actress, Hylas, and myself, had mounted back to our places, and were already half asleep, when she bustled in with her legion of comforts. None but a German *conducteur* would have had patience with the trouble she gave in their arrangement. At length, the good man had lit his pipe, and was preparing with a grunt to mount his perch, when once more called by her: —

villages, Langenzenn, Possenheim (where we stopped on returning), &c., are more miserable, more Irish-looking, than any thing I have seen elsewhere in Germany: and one might be excused a fair amount of impatience to have done with them and arrive at our destination. I was almost afraid — recollecting that I had been disappointed by the far-famed towns of Belgium, and having been wound up by circumstances to a pitch of anticipation utterly unwise. We were at Nuremburg at noon, in four and twenty hours after quitting Frankfort.

And for a moment I was disappointed, when the cessation of the columnar avenue of poplars made me aware that we were approaching the town — as if I could have expected the masterworks of Durer and Krafft and Visscher to meet me without the walls and the fosse. Thus, I am persuaded, by not taking the trouble to think, do nine tenths of travellers provide vexation for themselves. But the two grey-brown vigorous towers of the gate reassured me, and as we jingled under the archway we caught a glimpse of a case of "*hour-eggs*," hung against

the wall, to be disposed of, for aught I kn
in the primitive fashion of Davie Rams
watches. As we advanced further, perspect
and vistas, each more irregularly rich in
ornament than the last, disclosed themselv
and I felt sure that all was right, and tha
really was in what some one or other has
pressively called "the Venice of Germany."

Now, the difficulty seems to be how to pu
rein upon my pen. The greater number of
high steep-gabled houses have patron saints a
virgins, standing in all the freshness of rec
veneration, under elaborate and fantastic ca
pies, or else bower-windows, corner turrets, a
battlements — or balconies hanging over
Pegnitz. Then there are the two noble churc
commanding the two divisions of the town. T
stream which forms these is spanned by paint
bridges, each claimable as such from its irreg
lar and ancient form, or the accumulation
objects round it; and each, by its characteris
name, as the Carlsbrücke, the Fleischbrüc
suggesting its own associations. In short,
eye never received so much in the same sp

of time as during the walk from the post-house to the Bayersche Hof. That excellent hotel was, when reached, in itself a picture. Outwardly, it is a spacious irregular building, with a water front overhung by balconies worth the pains of a Prout or a Harding: inwardly, an edifice of court within court; one wall diversified by the pierced balustrade of a rich angular staircase; — another animated by this inscription —

VERITATI, VIRTUTI, SAPIENTIÆ, MUSIQUE, EREXIT
HOC TEMPLUM, ARTIUM ESTIMATOR, OPTIMUM, SUÆ PATRIÆ
OPTANS
Aurnheimer.
MDCCCI.

It is an Aurnheimer who still dispenses to the traveller the comforts which his family-house affords, with a manly good-nature and courtesy which it was not unnatural in part to ascribe to the consciousness of his good old name.

The short time I could devote to Nuremburg made a cicerone indispensable. At two o'clock my *lohndiener* made his appearance, and, though a trifle stupid after my night-journey and a

heavy dinner, I turned out full of expectatio
—first to the church of St. Laurence. Crossi
the bridge, and mounting the ridge on whi
one half of Nuremburg stands, I passed ma
sions and streets and openings, each richer th
the last. The very pent-houses, where the ro
and pulley of the merchant used to hang in t
days of the city's prosperity, are wreathed wi
garlands and foliage borders. There is hard
a wall which has not *blossomed out* into oriels-
hardly a battlement which has not shot up in
pinnacled turrets. But the climax is reach
in the mansion of the Duke of Nassau, clo
opposite the church whither I was bound. Th
has a florid battlement, and an oriel worth tr
velling to Nuremburg to draw. I thought
should never get into the church, so much i
outer features engaged me.

The building itself I do not pretend to d
scribe minutely. Guide-books tell of its ma
nificent portal and its bride's door; of th
faëry-like sacrament house, carved (I shou
say breathed) in stone by Adam Krafft, whi
leans against a pillar at the entrance of th

choir; of the splendid crucifix on the altar by Veit Stoss; and the singular floating group of the Salutation from the same hand. I had got the bead-roll of these curiosities by heart, but I had not been prepared for the overpowering effect of the interior. This does not merely depend upon the architectural boldness and spaciousness of the choir, which appeared to me as Gothic of the best epoch — nor yet upon the solemnity of the narrow and lofty nave, which is dimly monastic. To me, there was an authority and impressiveness in the long file of saints and hierarchs which line the aisle of this Lutheran church: and feelings yet deeper were awakened by the sight of insignia and escutcheons which hang every spandril and every pillar; — not a hatchment having been touched (it would seem) since the days when they were first hung up. "You must see the churches of Nuremburg," said one of the most accomplished Catholics of the day to a friend of mine, "to know what the Reformation has taken from us." And, as a treasury of the works of religious Art, they are, indeed, unpa-

ralleled in their richness: little less rem
able as a store of family memorials. The
windows in the choir attest not merely
faith and the wealth, but the emulation, of
grand old burghers of Nuremburg. Ea
grander than its neighbour; each was the
of a separate house — the Volkamers carr
the day by their offering, which cost four
thousand *gulden*. It is strange to observe
the midst of all the devotion that went to
enrichment of God's holy temple by the
nistry of Art, a touch of human pride
human longing to hand down to posterity
influential and renowned name; and, whil
felt the authority of the Church, it was
possible wholly to forget the magnificence of
Citizen, any more than the piety of the Arti

From the Laurence-Kirche I passed to
Frauen-Kirche, where the Romish worship
still celebrated. It is outwardly a splendid
small specimen of the richest Gothic; with
poor and tinselled in its decorations compa
with the superb temple I had quitted. Th
passing the exquisite fountain in the mark

place hard by, I was led up to the Burg — a strong castle, where the patriarchal linden-tree in the court-yard, and its rude Saxon chapel, and a long array of ill-proportioned narrow chambers garnished with worthless and ancient pictures, take one back to the darker times of rough and almost Pagan barbarism; and it was necessary to cast a look every now and then through the thick window embrasures upon the florid and fantastic town-panorama at our feet, to remember how much wealth and luxury and splendour had been accumulated since those grim towers had been built up. There, too, I lingered till but the last hour of sunshine was left me for the crowning delight of the day, in a visit to the gem of all the gems of Nuremburg.

This, in my estimation, is the Joannes Kirchhof, a burial-ground not far without the town. The pilgrim is reminded, on his way thither, of the pride and affluence of the place by the country-houses of the citizens which lie along the road, — comely and substantial dwellings. He is reminded of its belief by the sight of the seven stations which were set up by Mar-

tin Ketzel, a devout citizen, on return from his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, at the precise traditional distances measured betwixt Jerusalem and Calvary, where Christ paused on his last doleful pilgrimage. That the sculpture of these, by Adam Krafft, has been of a thoughtful and earnest pathos, may be seen by the one bas-relief which has been restored. In his day there was no dalliance with forms at the expense of the spirit within. I understand too little of the technicalities of the sculptor's art; but had I been fifty-fold more ignorant, I must have been touched by the intensely devotional expression of these tablets — mute remembrancers of a hereafter, set up in the daily sight of those whose lives rolled away in luxury and aggrandisement, — busy trade and curious invention!

But the *Via Dolorosa*, though full of serious and not profitless suggestion, struck me less than the burial-ground when it was reached. Along the road the spiritual mysteries of Christianity are mutely set forth in wholesome contrast to the evidences of life and wealth and

acquisition; but, in a strange revenge, as it were, its termination introduces the pilgrim into the proudest place where human Ambition ever asserted itself in the presence of Death. The worthies of Nuremburg are buried vain-gloriously beneath sarcophagi of strong granite — boldly formed, sharply chiselled, and be-decked with bronze insignia such as must strike the mind, if even they did not attract the eye as rich and curious works of art. For there lies the locksmith, in default of feudal device, with the emblems of his craft above him, — the keys, the saw, and the hammer. The printer's sepulchre bears the press, executed in like imperishable form. Among these magnificent mausolea, belonging to the rich and great men of the place, are the tombs of Albrecht Durer and his friend Wilibald Pirkheimer, Veit Stoss, Sandrart, the Behaims — one of whom went out with Columbus, — and Hans Sachs, the stout and cheerful cobbler poet. Almost all are as freshly preserved as if Nuremburg had kept its strength and pomp and

belief even unto this day! I could have lingered there a year to read the inscriptions and admire the splendid bronzes. And my cicerone (who was a thorough Nuremburgher, and proud of what he had to show) eyed me like a friend, for my unwillingness to leave a place so full of the fond poetry of human pride. But the day was fast declining; and I returned to the town by a lovely suburban circuit among old walls, broken with bits of vineyard and magnificent trees clad in Autumn's ripest gold and brown — and narrow gateways disclosing long avenues of ancient buildings. By this time Twilight had come down in its loveliest form, with a tinge of frost in the air, which made me not unwilling to end my meditations by the silent side of the German's chamber-companion — a stove.

It was, indeed, no vexation to me that the theatre in Nuremburg gave no performances that evening. I was told that its opera had a certain repute in its district, and had yielded more than one popular singer to the larger theatres.

But I was discomposed, in turning over the tea-paper pages of the town Gazette, by meeting, among the oddly domestic advertisements which fill the columns of a German journal, with a zealous call to the managers of the theatre to delight the public by ordering a performance of Lortzing's "Czar und Zimmermann." As I knew this manner of petitioning to be constantly employed in Germany, the thing itself did not surprise me. But the flimsy nature of the music chosen was felt to be a grievance; for my fancy was in a mood which would have gone far towards the denial of the admission of any opera whatsoever, as a thing too modish and frivolous for such a haunted place as Nuremburg!

It would have been strange if a town so forward in enterprise and mechanical invention, so affluent in the feelings that generate works of art, should have failed to contribute its share of wonders and worthies to Music, as well as to Painting and Architecture. Accordingly, as early as the fifteenth century, we find it pro-

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form. Besides their names, John Neudörffer's precious little catalogue * of the renowned artists of Nuremburg gives us the "style and title" of Burckhardt and Fella, two famous organ-builders; and a notice of John Meuschel, trumpet-maker and town trumpeter, who made a silver trumpet for Leo X.; — all these within the compass of the sixteenth century. It was but a few years later, in 1618, that one of the earliest essays at musical drama in Germany was promulgated at Nuremburg, in the *Schönes Singtspil von dreyen bösen Weiben.* It was there, too, at the close of the same seventeenth century, that John Christopher Denner added one of its most valuable instruments to the orchestra, by the invention of the clarionet. Even in Burney's time, Nuremburg maintained a certain individuality in Music, by its being the only German town where scores and other compositions were engraved on copper plates instead of being printed in type.

* "Johann Neudörffers Nachrichten von den vornehmsten Künstlern und Werkleuten so innerhalb hundert Jahren in Nürnberg gelebt haben, 1546, nebst der Forsetzung von Andreas Gulden, 1660."

I had not then my common-place boo my elbow, to comfort me with these assura that Music had fared well in a place so ri decorated by the kindred expressions of b tiful imaginings which Painting and Sculp present; and was obliged to put up with desecration — such as the petition for Lortzi music seemed to my unreasonable fancy - best I might. If I could, I would not I been less fastidious and bigoted for that hour, — less intensely impressed by the s of the place, — less imperatively called away f the times and manners of the world we living in!

The church of St. Sebald, where I be my Saturday's ramble among the treasures Nuremburg, is yet more magnificent and fu of ancestral memorials than its rival buildi If St. Laurence, too, has the Duke of Nass house close in his neighbourhood, close to Sebald's is the parsonage-house, with Melch Pfinzing's window; and hard by — backed three mansions, the centre one of which

especially rich in florid ornament — stands the new statue, by Rauch, of Albert Durer, which was inaugurated in the May of 1840 with a splendid festivity. I love the feeling which makes the Nuremburghers resolve to do honour to the memory of the most renowned among their worthies, and yet I cannot but think the form of their homage a questionable one; at least, if Charles Lamb's principle of "being modest for a modest man" holds good in Art as well as in beneficence. Surely, one would not write a new play in commemoration of Shakspeare, or a new "Hallelujah" to do homage to Handel. Would not a Durer *stift* (foundation) have been more in accordance with the spirit of the place? A Durer *verein* (association) there is. To set up a new effigy within a stone's-throw of the master-works of Krafft and Stoss and Peter Visscher, is no holiday task, even for a Rauch. The head of his statue seemed to me feeble, and its drapery wiry, and its forms burly. If all these thoughts were passing through my mind while I was waiting for the sexton's keys, how much more earnestly did they occur to me when the

Tamerlane's marble-work,
with its kings, and its
equestrian, all miniature fig
may be called which, in
direction of expression,
best Colleges of ancient
religious feeling of those
than the exquisite folia
which has flowers all aro
sprig from among kings,
as embosses a fancy an
the soldiers bows were
and embroidered by the
branch. There is a weak
eye in this divine: how, th
it who could only behow
contemplation? Other thi
more rapidly comprehen
hastily to be set down.
upon memorial, monume
Above the tomb of the B

Paradise, with the whole history "of Man's first disobedience," by Kreuzfelder. The Tuchers, again, in the midst of a pompous announcement of their names and works, show a skeleton bearing a scroll in its hand; and above, a lamp, lighted in the days of Catholicism, and which the tolerant spirit of Lutheranism, and the Nuremburgher's lingering pride in his ancestry, still allow to burn. What a romance of history and opinion could one have conjured up by the aid of that tiny flame! Outside the church is another sepulchre, with a Calvary group behind it, sculptured by Adam Krafft, and a rich open-worked stone lantern before it; but there the light is extinct, and the name forgotten.

The number of endowments still in force is not the least interesting feature of Nuremburg. After a glimpse at the Moritz Kapelle, which is now made the repository of such antique and inferior pictures by Wohlgemuth and Kulmbach and Schongauer and Cranach as were not thought worthy of a place in the Berlin or Munich or Boisserée collections, I went across to the Rath-haus, or Town-hall, a spacious

building, with an Italian front masking one of those elder intricate Gothic compositions of staircase and court and secret passage which help to give the town its Middle-Age character. Passing through a gateway into a central court, we were about to ascend the staircase which conducts us to the show-rooms, when my guide asked me to stand aside for a moment. "The old men," he said, "are coming down." "What old men?" was the natural question. In explanation I was told that a dole of clothing, bequeathed by one of the Münzer family, was annually distributed on that day to a hundred old men, who had just been invested with the same. I never saw a more capital picture than was made by their descent. In the foreground, at the bottom of the staircase, stood a cloaked and tassel-capped burgher, with his hands clasped behind him, resting on his cane — the very figure Rembrandt has painted a thousand times. Presently we heard the dull shuffling sound of feeble feet, and down crept the ancient men in every degree of old age and decrepitude, the sun catching their white heads and thankful

frostbitten faces as they passed down the wide gloomy staircase, crowned with new hats, and wrapt in their long warm coats of greasy olive-coloured cloth; neither gossiping nor wrangling, but helping each other. Indeed, I fancied the general expression of countenance quite different from that angry sturdiness or querulous irritability one so often encounters among the old in English almshouses. In the midst their ranks were diversified by the figure of a stalwart old woman, who was striding down three steps at a time to carry home to her bedridden husband his allotted coat and hat, which she wore in his stead. It was precisely the group one would have bespoken to see in Nuremburg!

When the last of the troop had vanished, we mounted to the great hall, a spacious and dark apartment, of very ancient date, decorated with a fresco painting, by Albert Durer, of the Triumphs of Maximilian. But I could hardly look at these — hardly take note of a grand piano, of most primitive build, surrounded by music-desks, which told to what peaceful purposes it was now appropriated; for I was still thinking

had left a legacy benefiting another hundred of old men — of a Landauer, who had founded the free-school — of Münzer, who had joined with Conrad Gross, endowing the hospitals — and of one of the Mendels, whose piety had led to the building of the Moritz Kapelle, now secularised to serve the purposes of Art at the express instance of King Louis of Bavaria. I was pondering over the last illustration of the magnificent spirit of the place, when, slowly and unexpectedly, the organ in St. Sebald's, distinctly audible from the place where I stood, began to give out some of those mighty chords which are even more imposing, thus heard afar off, than when one is close beneath them. "They are practising," said my *valet-de-place*, "for the Reformation Festival to-morrow; and that is why the theatre will be shut."

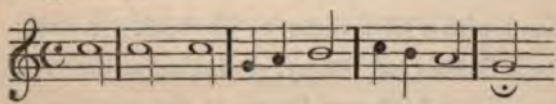
I fear to become prosy in the detail of personal impressions, and saw Nuremburg too casually to pretend any amendment of or addition to the catalogue of its rarities furnished

resolving at every step to return to Nuremburg for a sojourn some future day. During a part of the long evening, I occupied myself with picking out a few musical dates and facts from a file of Munich journals, by way of breaking fresh ground in that quarter. They were giving at that time "Der Alchymist," by Count Pocci. And of nine works added or revived in the preceding twelvemonth, five had been French, three German — if the "Graf Armand" ("Les Deux Journées") of Cherubini be permitted to count as such, — with the "Alceste" of Gluck, and "Die Beiden Schutzen" of Lortzing; — and one Italian, the "Mosé" of Rossini. The same strange want of nationality in theatrical music, then, seemed to pervade the Bavarian as the Prussian capital. Yet who has done more for national art in Germany than King Louis? I cannot comprehend why it should be that Music should be left out of the calculation. But it seemed to be so.

Betimes the next morning I was on my way to St. Sebald's church, to assist in the cele-

(I caught a glimpse of the schnellpost Hylas wandering about); — I cannot add, as much of that abstracted and silent devotion among the women, which is so remarkable and worthy an object of imitation in the behaviour of those attending what some have been pleased to call "the idolatrous sacrifice of the Mass."

Short time I had to look round me and note as little as this; for, while I was considering the remarkable mixture of creeds past and present which the scene presented, the organ burst out, and with it one thousand voices, into a grand Lutheran Corale which I had in vain sought for in Herr Schneider's choir-book. It will be best known to my reader as the tune tortured to stage uses by Meyerbeer in "Les Huguenots:"



But what were all Meyerbeer's effects, produced by "rhyming and twirling" that noble old psalm, compared with the grandeur of this?

I have never been more strongly moved by music. As verse after verse of the grand tune rolled through the dim vaults of the church with a mighty triumph, it appeared to my fancy as if the effigies and pictures on the walls began to shake and tremble and fade,—the Saints to droop their heads dejectedly,—and the votive light, from which, somehow or other, I never strayed far when in the church of St. Sebald, to flicker as if it were about to expire. The aspect of the congregation, too, seemed to undergo a metamorphosis, as if a sternness and defiance came up into the eyes and lips of the people while they joined loudly and heartily in the plain but lofty song of trust and thanksgiving. I see before me now one stout old man, who was sitting by himself, psalter in hand, with a Geneva cap on his head,—a study for a Balfour of Burley,—singing at the very top of his Lutheran lungs, at the very feet of *such* a sweet, angelic, palm-bearing saint, who drooped from her niche above him! And as I looked and listened, strange was the conflict between the homage due to those ancients and

bold thinkers who broke for the world the cerements in which Mind was becoming decrepit, and between a natural yearning after that still elder faith which was addressing the heart through the eye with a power not to be withstood, even at the moment that the ear was ringing with the triumph of its extinction.

After such a strong musical sensation, I could not stay for a poor motett, poorly performed with full orchestra (another relic of Popery!). If the instruments had not been weak, if the vocal execution had not been flimsy, if the music had not been head-music, at best the effect must have been small, after that colossally grand part-singing. So I issued forth into the sunshiny street, perfectly silent and deserted, for a last quiet look at the most fascinating place I have ever entered.

I was bound at noon for Frankfort. The return journey was long and unpleasant: a peasant woman with a basket of doves — a government official, who had no words to

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waste on any of his companions — and a re
eyed cripple, whom one could hardly sit opp
site, still less touch, without having to contr
most painful feelings, — offered nothing to r
place the amusing little romance the progre
of which I had watched on my road to Nuren
burg. The weather, too, began to break; an
if I had not had my journal to think over, an
my version of Victor Hugo's "*Guitarre*"
complete, the hours would indeed have seeme
interminable, ere we were delivered at mi
night into the cavernous court-yard of the Po
at Wurzburg.

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CHAPTER I.

SUNDAY MORNING.

Nuremburg to Paris. — Fellow Traveller. — Talk about Art. — Church *de la Belle Epine.* — *Fronton* of the Pantheon. — Notre Dame de Lorette. — Traffic in the Temple. — Saints and Fashions. — The old Churches of Paris. — Figures to be seen in them. — A Wedding in Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. — A pleasanter Group. — A Lying-in-State in Notre Dame. — Criticisms by the side of the Dead. — A Note on the Restorations at St. Denis. — Church of St. Eustache. — Its Fête-day. — The Troubadour of a *Guinguette.* — High Mass. —M. Dietsch's Music.—Harp and Gong ; with a Word on the intrinsic and associated Sacredness of different Instruments. — Connection of Art and Religion indispensable to the Production of the highest Works. — A last Illustration of the Union of Church and Opera.

To exchange Nuremburg for Paris, without intermediate pause — and Paris, too, convulsed

by expectations of the Guizot ministry *début*, was not altogether unlike passing fro the calmness of a cloister to those mansions Pandemonium, if there be such, where Hat and Contention, and restless Ambition are a lowed to wear the masks of Luxury and Civili ation. As my one travelling companion fro Frankfort was French to the thorough wa point, as impatient to arrive in time for th first-fruits of the *crise* as I should have bee for the first night of Meyerbeer's long-de ferred opera, it was a peculiar piece of goo fortune that, besides the courtesy which belong to an old name, he should also possess the ey of an artist, and the perception of a poet — na more, during a South German tour, have re cently visited the church of St. Sebald, an St. John's burial-ground, and admired the little less fervently than myself. Thus, havin contented himself with a significant "*au re voir bientôt*" to the fortifications of Mayenc for the rest of our forty-eight hours' ride w had abundant neutral ground to meet upo We could admire, in concord, the beautiful o

building upon the hill but a mile or two before the traveller in the *mallepost* reaches his dinner at Châlons-sur-Marne. This is the Church de la Belle Epine, built — so our host told us, while serving out the soup — by the English: a relic of the richest Gothic, worth half a day's study. Though we could not discuss the new ministry, we could talk of the new works in Paris; beginning with the July column — that dwarfish and over-decorated failure, whose gilt and winged Genius, crowning its summit, whimsically brings to mind Ingoldsby's couplet in "The Monster Balloon:"

> "And Fame, with one leg in the air, like the Queen,
> With three wreaths and a trumpet shall over them lean."

From the July column it was a natural step to the preparations commanded of M. Marochetti for the obsequies of Napoleon, and the wrong done in withholding the commission from David, "because," said my companion, with bitter emphasis, "he is a republican!" Thence, of course, we passed naturally to David's *chef-d'œuvre*, the *fronton* of the Pantheon, — to

La Madeleine, that gayest and least solem
temples, — and to that tawdry bazaar, N
Dame de Lorette, which even the sweetnes
its organ, by M. Cavaillè-Coll, cannot lure
into admiring. "As to Notre Dame," contin
——, with that inimitable *nonchalance* which
Englishman can ever acquire, "after all, i
well enough for what it is!" and out cam
tale of "sellers of doves and money-change
to speak metaphorically, who carry on dur
the hours of worship a recognised traffic wh
it is needless to particularise. The poor L
of Loretto! she has fallen into irreverent han
A whimsical anecdote is told of the series
sacred pictures which adorn the clerestory w
with the crude blue and scarlet and orange of
modern French school. Their artist began
labours under the reign of a past dynasty
fashions, when no lady could be dressed — a
of course, no St. Barbara or Bridget—withou
balloon on each shoulder as large as her b
While the work was in progress, the comp
veered to the opposite extreme; and the pain
not to be behind his time, reconsidered

costume, and absolutely changed all the draperies of his figures — the *gigot* sleeves of the holy women, that is, into the true scanty cut *à l'Amadis!*

I hope these are only two good stories. The latter, at all events, is not a type of the spirit and taste now presiding over the beautification of the sacred edifices of Paris.

To me, even before the architect and the glass-painter and the carver had taken them in hand, the churches in the French metropolis had always had a particular charm. The guide-books make little account of them; but, like the flitting figures of the Sisters of Charity, whom the heart loves to follow in the streets, they offer precisely that repose so eminently needed amid all the life and passion of Paris. The sight of a grim and overhanging porch, with its time-melted sculptures, and a dwarfish old woman or two crouched on its steps to carry on some small traffic beneath its shelter, is a temptation I can never resist. While prying about within their precincts, I have hardly ever failed to encounter some

figure upon which the imagination could fasten. One day it has been a *grisette*, tripping down the stream of sunshine shed along the dusty pavement from the high windows, *cartou* in hand, and passing before the chapel of her favourite saint to take out her week's allowance of little sins in a short prayer or two. One day it has been the meagre mournful old man or woman who watches the triangular frame of tin, with its rapidly-wasting votive candles: another, the identical Maturin or Lucas of Molière's comedies and Johannot's sketches, with his coarse pleurous hair and his *pot au feu* complexion, his *sabots* clattering as he comes, but taught by some remain of traditional reverence, especially if he be of Breton stock, to clatter—as old Mr. Wesley's children were taught to cry—quietly. I have witnessed in one or other of them almost all the ceremonies marking the progress of life which are so interesting in a strange land. The first time I entered the triple porch of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, recently repaired, and its choir-windows renewed with stained glass, as richly violet as if they were

set up to promise a second advent of Napoleon, I came in for a wedding. The bride, it is true, was an ugly woman, with projecting teeth, and not very young; but she was tricked out with orange flowers and a blonde veil as tastefully as though she had been a Duchess; and she tried her best to elongate her mouth to that meek simper which the beauty-painters in France render so well. The bridegroom I but remember for the tenderness of his side-glances, which, considering their object, were, as I once heard a tourist remark of the ruined castles of the Rheingau, "amazingly well got up." The two were standing ceremoniously under a scarf of white damask, held by a couple of youths, who jested behind their backs while the service proceeded, till the officiating priest approached the bridegroom with the pouch,—whether for the *quête* (collection) for the poor, or for his own fees, I know not. This the youth deposited betwixt his finger and thumb; but the old white-haired man, whose lynx eyes followed the operation, perceived some informality, and began to protest against it. "It *was* enough," the

bridegroom declared; "he would give no mor
"It was not," replied the priest, emptying t
contents of the little bag into his wrinkled pal
and, from contesting the amount under th
breath, the two were beginning to gesticula
and to scold audibly, when the bride, with
magnanimity worthy of imitation, dived in
her jaunty reticule, and, drawing out a coi
with a contemptuous shrug of disdain, put a
end to the dispute. I strolled away, amus
rather than gratified. Another chapel show
me a prettier group. This was gathered o
the occasion of a baptism, or what our praye
book calls "the churching of women." In t
centre was the tiny pink-faced *marmotte*, warm
swathed, and daintily balanced in the arms
a middle-aged woman, with good neighbour
every line of her honest face, and a tear in h
eye. Close to her was the meek mother on h
knees, and a couple of huge whiskered soldie
kneeling behind her, and bowing their fac
over their cocked hats. The little party w
flanked on the one side by a country lad wi
earrings, and on the other by a young artis

bound for the Louvre, with his portfolio under his arm. In spite of his magnificent pelisse, and his wide-brimmed hat, he was as hermaphrodite in the aspect of his long black curls, and his scrupulously smooth throat, as if he had taken the fashion of his toilette from the authoress of "Mauprat" and "Les Maîtres Mosaistes."

I could make out a gallery of such little scenes gathered one day in St. Germain dès Pres, with its antique monuments and its uncouth pulpit heavily canopied with a marble drapery; — another in St. Gervais (Couperin's church), with its Pietro Perugino, and its (so-called) Albrecht Durer, a picture of many pictures; — a third in St. Mèry, with its grand Gothic portal: but I will only trouble the reader with one more.

This was the lying-in-state of M. de Quelen, the late Archbishop of Paris, in his own cathedral. I have made few pilgrimages to Notre Dame without being repaid by some glimpse of the "*Avant*," "*Pendant*," or "*Après*" of French life and history yet more suggestive than the

mere outward solemnities of long-drawn a
and flying buttresses. Once (have I not alre
said it?) it was a gipsy girl dancing in
Parvis I saw: once, I turned over those t
sures in the sacristy, which, if there were
mons in damask and gold lace, could preac
solemn a homily — the coronation vestment
Napoleon! But the show of the seventh
January, 1840, was more imposing, and
also its moral. It was a brilliantly-fr
morning; — the sunshine brought out e
fragment of building, old and new, in that
comparable prospect of the *quais*, with a c
talline sharpness and transparency never to
seen in London by any chance. The cries
the streets seemed to take a double shrill
from the exquisite clearness of the air; and
fumes of the little smoking kitchens on
Pont Neuf a visible savouriness — (have
been ever ungenteel enough, dear Paris
grim, to stop and taste *la galette* there?)
crowd of people, quick, merry, and vocifero
was streaming towards Notre Dame, and
Place beneath its grand pair of towers was al

with all the stir and colour and variety of a fair. It was necessary to fall into a long *queue*, extending a quarter round the church, to gain the door of entrance; and there were bustling hither and thither suttlers with their steaming viands, and hawkers in shabby mourning, crying the last edifying sayings of "M. l'Archévêque," in a tone as gay as if they had been calling the piece of the evening among the benches of a theatre! There, too, were gay *grisettes* carrying on an interchange of repartee with National Guardsmen — and *gamins*, in their blue *blouses*, pushing every where in search of such prey as the *palletots* of the unwary could yield from their pockets — and young black-browed artists, muffled to the moustache in those guilty-looking cloaks the sight of which suggests conspiracy and melodrame. Hovering on the skirts of this motley and most un-funereal procession might be seen a cab or two, so English in its magnificence of horse and minuteness of tiger, as to remind one, even there, how marvellously in France has flourished the good seed of sporting propensities sown in the latter days of the cen-

tury by the Duke de Chartres, and other of t
Anglomanes of the day.

We were at last at the portal, about as muc
prepared for the spirit of the scene within as
Longchamps, and not the presence of Death i
the house of God, had been the object of o
—curiosity! On entering, the eye was stru
by the dim perspective of the side aisle, hu
with sweeping and dingy black draperies: t
ear presently caught a shrill and sonoro
chanting of men and boys as the splendid chap
was approached, where the deceased reclined
his gilded state-bier. The corpse was mitred a
stoled and shod gorgeously, with crosier in han
the lights of a hundred tapers falling upon th
waxen mask which had been a face, and upon t
rigid fingers. Several priests knelt at the fo
of the bier, and rose slowly and reverently, o
by one, to make genuflexions at the feet of t
corpse, and to kiss its emaciated hands.
seemed impossible to consider such a spe
tacle without a certain awe and reluctan
To what holier and more quiet death-be
of old men my thoughts had wandered aw

during the second when, in my turn, I was allowed to pause before the gilded rails of the altar, it were superfluous to tell. But I was suddenly startled back to Paris by a pair of voices from the midst of a pair of beards, the sound of which detached itself from the hum of whispering speakers, and the dull sound of feet slowly moving on, which of themselves sufficiently destroyed the solemnity of the place.

"He sees her, Adolphe! that handsome young fellow with the broad shoulders, just before he knelt,—I am sure he saw her." The "her" was an excessively pretty and moderately-coquettish nymph, whose toilette told of a very liberal *jour de l'an:* the "he" who knelt was, of course, one of the priests.

"*Bah!*" replied the other, adjusting a *lorgnette*, "I cannot make out whether they have painted the old man's cheeks or not. They have stuffed his chest well, at all events; and, I dare say, given him a waist."

"What will you bet he is not painted?"

"Never a *sou*," was the louder answer.

"They know how to get up these things. S——! I have forgotten my cigar-case!"

"Silence! silence!" cried one of the functionaries in attendance, in a tone little less grotesque and shrill than Moulaur throws into the word when playing the *huissier* in "Figaro." And we moved on. Every word that passed must have been heard by the officiating priests; and, as I was pushed to the door of exit, amid outcries and personalities little less secular (to use a gentle expression), I could not but bethink me of the remark which —— made on the far-famed cemetery of Père la Chaise, where a tip-toe flight of *coryphées* seem almost demanded by the jaunty monuments and the operatic elegies of the place. "They have neither time, taste, nor spirits for Death in Paris, — save on the stage!"

Since I first knew France, it has become the fashion to expend large sums of money on the churches of Paris, — not only in restoring their

monuments* and the fragments of ancient sculpture, and filling the windows with painted

* Foremost among these restorations are the works in progress at the Cathedral of Saint Denis, which have been going on for several years, and include a splendid organ by MM. Cavaillé-Coll. I spent a couple of most interesting hours in the church and in the organ, on one of the most ungenial days of last November. "The arrangement of the choir," says a note made in my journal, "by which a sort of pale rose-coloured reflection is thrown upon the white arches and massive piers around it, is, perhaps, too pretty, but still *painter*esque." The organ fills the whole breadth of the aisle, and, following the peculiar shape of the vault, is thrown, to my thinking, into the least graceful form of Gothic construction; that is, a steep gable divided by a high turret down the centre and flanked with two lower ones. Some one was playing when I went in; I listened eagerly for the sounds, and will not prejudge "a half-done deed" by declaring that, though full, they seemed to me *woolly*, and the tone of the pedal pipes hardly to have that searching weight and depth which pedal pipes ought to have. I had been spoilt, I suppose, by the Silbermann organs at Dresden. On the other hand, there was a sweetness and sonorousness of tone which I have not met in any French instrument. I was afterwards most politely shown over the organ by Mr. Barker, a countryman who has gained a *brévet d'invention* here for facilitating the touch of these enormous instruments. The construction seems to me finished with infinite care and neatness within (to this the sweetness and

glass, only one degree less brilliant than
which the Terrorists shivered; but also in r
stating their musical services. The old feroci
and tinkling organs, as devoid of any real de
tional tone as a dowager in the days of
Regency, are gradually falling into discred
and the old players, whose evolutions used
remind me of nothing so much as a game
hunt-the-slipper played by a party sitting on
the four ranges of keys, are giving way
better instructed and more reverential succ
sors. Classical preluders and steady fuguists
come in time; and I think a Schneider o
Mendelssohn would run as fair a chance, j
now, of becoming the fashion in Paris as
works of Gluck and the *names* of Palestrina a
Orlando Lasso. A chapel is in formation
St. Germain l'Auxerrois, under the auspices
M. Julien Martin, whose musical direction
the cathedral of Angers was followed by v

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duration of the Silbermann organs is to be largely
cribed), the arrangement unusually void of complex
and the mechanism of the bellows at once light and
cient. — *Nov.* 11. 1840.

good results. There was more than a rumour, too, of an utter and entire reform of the musical part of the services at Notre Dame. But as these innovations and renovations were only in expectancy last November, and as I had heard much of the music in the church of Saint Eustache, I resolved to bend my steps thitherward on the Sunday morning after my arrival.

The ninth of the month happened, by good fortune, to be the Saints' day of the church. As I approached it, so numerous became the concourse of people, that I could have fancied myself in the sabbath-keeping town of Edinburgh. To be sure, the aspect of the Paris congregation was something different! How different, again, from the aspect of those among whom, but seven short days before, I had celebrated the Reformation Festival in the church of St. Sebald at Nuremburg! As I passed the tower of St. Jacques de la Boucherie, there issued from one of the dark noisome lanes thereabouts (where the smell of *friture* is never extinct) a boy of seventeen, in a *palletot* of black plush, and with a *toque* of the same

a motley concourse of all sexes, ages, and conditions, in the midst of which my Troubadour was no marvel. The amount of worship in the place it is less easy to estimate. I remarked, however, that there were many operatives of the very lowest class, acutely attentive to the music of the Mass, and from whom, when any chromatic change or striking effect of the orchestra came in course, proceeded such a hum of admiration and interchange of approving look as might have been elicited from a Puritan congregation by some doctrinal subtlety or some fire-and-brimstone denunciation expounded by its pulpit Boanerges. It was difficult, indeed, owing to the eagerness of these amateurs, who clustered upon chairs, leaning against each other, wherever a glimpse of the choir could be procured, to approach that part of the church.

The Mass was by M. Dietsch, the *maître de chapelle.* To match the gorgeous array of priests at the altar, in their damask and velvet and cloth of gold, he had provided a full and very fine orchestra, a numerous chorus, and

one or two efficient singers from the Opera the *soli* parts; if I mistake not, M. Al Dupont among the number. The composi was clever and brilliant, and full of dram effects. The Kyrie and Gloria and Cr came severally in welcome relief after merely chaunted parts of the service, wh the monstrous organ above the grand trance brayed out some of those brassy sud chords I have already ventured to anat matise. But the Gloria in C major, $\frac{5}{8}$ ti after a few bars, fell into the *one-two* rhythm swing to which a stage procession might h defiled; and, as it went on, I could not h calling up the aspect of the whole chorus the Grand Opera, for which more than composer has written music far heavier and melodious. The "Credo," founded on Gregorian chaunt, declaimed from the al had more of what we are used to consider real church style; though the "Et Incarnat was introduced by such a wonderful tinkl of harps, that I was reminded of the vision "Les Huguenots;" and, I think at the wo

"judicare vivos et mortuos," a very fine trumpet effect, with a single stroke of the gong, again dramatised the solemn text not infelicitously.

One is compelled to apply strange words to strange things. We have seen the Church on the opera stage; — here was the Opera in the church — both the audience and the music. And yet I have since vainly endeavoured to give myself a reason why this or that peculiar instrument should be as unfit for sacred music as our associations seem to have made them, which shall be better than the absence of personality ascribed to organs I noted when listening to Herr Schneider. Certain it is, that there is hardly one component part of the modern orchestra which is not specified in the Psalms of David, or the Chronicles of the Old Testament. Miriam, the prophetess, led the women of Israel to rejoice over the overthrow of the horse and his rider with "timbrels and *with dances*." David enjoins the chosen people of God "to praise their Lord upon the harp," "with trumpets also and with shawms," "with the strings

and pipe." And "the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer," to the sound of which Nebuchadnezzar ordained that men should bow down and worship his golden image, were not instruments exclusively belonging to the heathen. If we say that with Christianity these things were swept away, as utensils made with hands, like the phylacteries of the Pharisees, and the traffickers who yet more shamelessly profaned the Temple,—what follows? The disunion of Art from Religion,—the uncompromising adoption of those tenets which find snares and sinfulness in the gifts of a gracious Providence, and believe that the eye with its discernment of form and colour, and the ear with its sensibility to sound, at best but minister to those sensual and pleasurable instincts the repression of which is ordained by Faith and Holiness. Such a creed as this has been already combated by implication throughout the whole of these sketches. I have written ill, or they have been read carelessly, if it be not obvious that I have assumed the vivifying and enduring principles of Art to be Truth and Belief, which

pertain to the spirit and not the senses of man. Without them, I cannot but believe that the Drama will take the form of feverish violent creations, such as serve to inflame men's minds when times of convulsion impend; and Painting will become a superficial array of those pedantries of detail, and those tricks of hand, which change with every new generation; and Music will only pander to the caprices of the egotistic and the half-instructed, at the expense of those vivid convictions which made a Handel, a Gluck, and a Beethoven immortal in their works. But though it be hard to say why a harp should be intrinsically less devotional than an organ-pipe, or a flageolet than a serpent, save upon narrow and insufficient grounds, it seems to me inevitable as a deduction, that the levity of spirit *, over which no associations of time and

* While I was transcribing these last pages for the press, one of the latest numbers of "Les Guêpes"—those monthly tracts in which the unscrupulous M. Alphonse Karr serves up the "accidents and offences" of the past four weeks in the true *soufflé* style — fell into my hands; one may stumble upon a *sors* even in "Les Guêpes,"—and mine was strange enough. "This advertisement is

place have power, confounding the emoti
suitable to a lighted theatre with those belong
to the aisles of a cathedral, must influence
favourably not only sacred but also secular
Thus, then, — to state the conclusion of
whole matter as regards Music: so long as
mind of France, as now, is wandering hither
thither in search of some point of settlemen
so long as the society of France remains to
a brilliant chaos of things most precious
things most vile cast up and swept togetl
where the honour of men and the virtu
women may be lightly derided even in
presence of the honourable and the virtuous
the end, I think, will but be dissatisfaction.
matters not if there be brilliant orchestras
gigantic organs, — theatres adorned with ev
luxury of decoration by the most consumm
taste, — and artists whose mechanical pov

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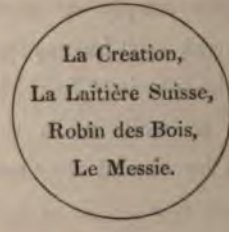
going the round of the press: On Sunday, M. Lacor
will preach at Notre Dame in his *Dominican habit*."
reminds me of some of those country play-bills whic
nounce that Mademoiselle Georges would act suc
such a part — and "*wear all her diamonds*."

can receive no further cultivation. The employment of all these precious materials, being conducted on no principle save a prurient conformity to a world of fluctuating and licentious opinions and corrupt morality, can leave little permanent fruit behind it—can exercise little permanent influence on the progress of Art in Europe. We may continue in Music, as in more solid commodities, to take our toys and our fancies from our more ingenious neighbours: we may imitate them in all their mechanical readiness, but for examples of progress, and aim, and for standard additions to the world's store of ideas and creations, we must look elsewhere;—to the people who, not scorning the present, still recognise a future!

"What a pretty Mass!" said ——, whom I shook hands with just on leaving the church; adding, whether simply or sardonically the reader shall guess, — "but as for the 'Credo,' I prefer Donnizetti's, in 'Les Martyrs,' which Duprez sings so well, when they break the idols." The Church and the Opera again! *

* I do not throw this *refrain* out at random. Every

stranger in Paris of course frequents L'Opera Com the sparkle and brilliancy of which, — the point completeness of its little dramas, the sprightliness music, and the exquisite care and finish in its *ensu* must engage the surliest *laudator temporis acti.* too, the temple of that delightful amusement is, in worth a visit — and a chapter, were not space prec The new theatre, on the site of the favourite Italian O is exquisite in the light and gay taste of its decorat M. Berlioz, indeed, compared it to "a whited sepulc because the French have been used of late days to gree of colour, in the ornaments of their public ro which no English eye can bear: but, by this time, *beau monde* of Paris has become reconciled to the w and gold of the Salle Favart, — to the delicate gaiet the *foyer*, with its mirrors and chandeliers, and its mo floor, always fresh and cool-looking. Having taken observation of all these dainty devices last autumn, w waiting for the commencement of Nicolo's ever pr "Joconde," I began, out of sheer idleness, to spell the names of composers and *chefs-d'œuvre*, which, bo together within garlands, form a border of circular tal round the high ceiling. The first I fell upon this! —



CHAP. II.

THE PALACE AND THE PEOPLE.

A few more Contrasts.— Morning in *Le Jardin des Plantes.* — Lablache at Dinner. — Evening at Madame d'Abrantes'.— Her melancholy Death. — Versailles, as sketched by Titmarsh: — as seen by me. — The old *Noblesse* of France. — Life for French Morals. — The Historical Galleries. — A few of their Curiosities. — A King of *Papier-maché.* — The Princess Marie's Joan of Arc. — Two Sonnets. — The Princess Marie and M. Edgar Quinet. — Architecture for the People. — The Dog-kennels. — Normal School. — Music for the People. — M. Beranger and M. Wilhem. — The Method of the latter — its moral Influences. — The *Halle aux Draps.* — The Scholars — their Behaviour. — Possible Results. — Quotation from M. Frégier. — Artistic Fruit to be expected from the Musical Education of the People. — Truth and Purity the only solid Basis of Progress.—French Knowledge of Sacred Music.—The Influence of the People replacing that of the Palace.

I CANNOT close my journals of Paris without desultorily stringing together a few more of the contrasts and varieties of life and opinion which it is possible to embrace there within a small compass of time, if the world of people — not things

—be entered. When the Stradella breakfast I have already mentioned broke up, one of its fashionable patrons of art was bound for the Arsenal—another to inquire after the well-doing of his brood mares. M. le Prince ——, resolved to make a musical day of it, departed for one of M. Tilmant's delightful *matinées*, where some of the best chamber-music in Paris was that season to be heard. My flight took me further, in every sense of the word; yet, within half an hour, I was walking in the leafless alleys of Le Jardin des Plantes, as busily engaged among the traces left by its departed master-spirit, Cuvier, as if, so shortly before, I had not been entangled among the duets, choruses, and *finales* of the new opera, and the just-discovered chemical contrivance which was to get up a stage sunset,—like Nattier's rose, fifty times more beautiful than the reality.

I lingered late in Le Jardin, and left it all natural history. Dinner took me back, from the wonders of the vegetable and animal world, to the wonder of the operatic hemisphere. Lablache was at table, in the full flow of

those gay Neapolitan spirits of his, and that shrewd perception of character which gives to his stage personifications so much freshness as well as variety, and that gentlemanly good humour which deprives his mirth of bitterness yet more than of coarseness. We had a fair assortment of cleverness from all countries — merchants, politicians, men of pleasure and of title, and one or two handsome and intellectual heads; but in every point the artist carried the day, and ruled the table; and I think that my exclusive countrymen, —— and ——, must have eaten and drank and departed under the bewildering pressure of an entirely new idea — namely, that an Italian musician was not inevitably the effeminate and degraded and foolish being satirised in the days of Addison and Steele.

Another and most signal example of the contrasts to be encountered in Paris presented itself in the fourth change of scene, which served for close to a pleasant but rather hurrying day. This I found in the two small and humbly furnished rooms where Madame

la Duchesse d'Abrantes received her weekly guests. Who could enter them and not think of the brilliant *fêtes* of Paris, at which, as Junot's wife, she had queened it in her time? Herself, too! — when I saw her, every trace of youth and elegance was gone. Her figure was clumsy, her eye heavy, her voice hoarse, and her spirits feverish; heavy eye and hoarse voice and feverish spirits referable to the same habit of indulgence in opiates. It was a complete metamorphosis. One could not, in her case, speak of difference between the present and the past, — between the literary drudge, compelled, out of an exhausted store, to coin volume after volume for a satiated public, and the intimate companion of Napoleon! The noisy repartee and anecdote which filled her small rooms, and in which she bore a most incessant part, could not deafen me to the recollections that would arise as I watched her cajoling one or two of those confident black-bearded haunters of every *salon*, in every line of whose countenances there is "*journaliste*" as clearly written as if the printer's devil had stamped it there. This was

only a few months before the contrasts of Madame d'Abrantes' lot were brought to a climax by her death in a hospital! When she was lying there — once the inmate of palaces — in almost her last hours, the nurse in attendance pointed her out to a party of visitors who were making the tour of the wards: — "What!" exclaimed the expiring woman, "is it *me* you would make a show of?" Surely there is no place for contrasts like Paris!

Except, perhaps, Versailles; whither — as if to complete the course of varieties — I was bound the very next day after I had looked on this saddening relic of the Empire. "Duller than the fat weed," indeed, must he be who can approach that magnificent pile for the first time as though it were any other common show-place. The most obvious contrasts of Versailles have been too recently exhausted by a master in sketching and speculation*, to be touched upon a second time. There is a cabinet picture of the palace and its

* In "The Paris Sketch Book, by Michael Angelo Titmarsh."

history in the following paragraph, wort
score of diluted pages of description :—

"You pass," says the writer, "from
railroad station through a long lonely sub
with dusty rows of stunted trees on either s
and some few miserable beggars, idle b
and ragged old women, under them. Beh
the trees are gaunt mouldy houses, palaces o
where (in the days of the unbought grace
life) the cheap defence of nations gambl
ogled, swindled, intrigued: whence high-b
duchesses used to issue, as in old times, to
as chamber-maids to lovely Du Barri; a
mighty princes rolled away in gilt caroch
hot for the honour of lighting His Majesty
bed, or of presenting his stockings when
rose, or of holding his napkin when he din
Tailors, chandlers, tinmen, wretched huc
sters, and green-grocers, are now establish
in the mansions of the old peers; children a
yelling at the doors, with mouths besmear
with bread-and-treacle; damp rags are han
ing out of every one of the windows, stea
ing in the sun; oyster-shells, cabbage-stall

broken crockery, old papers, lie basking in the same cheerful light. A solitary water-cart goes jingling down the wide pavement, and spirts a feeble refreshment over the dusty, thirsty stones. After pacing for some time through such dismal streets, we *deboucher* on the grand place; and before us lies the palace dedicated to all the glories of France. In the midst of the great lonely plain, this famous residence of King Louis looks low and mean. Honoured pile! — time was when tall musqueteers, and gilded body guards, allowed none to pass the gate: fifty years ago, ten thousand drunken women from Paris broke through the charm; and now a tattered commissioner will conduct you through it for a penny, and lead you up to the sacred entrance of the palace."

True, to a cabbage-stalk, is this description; but it is not the whole of Versailles as I have known it. The wide, silent avenues — the forsaken and desolate-looking hotels — were there; but there were signs of life, as well as tokens of decay, at Versailles, when I first visited it in 1836.

consciousness of distinction
to call forth the affections
vanity — I should recall th
of my arrival at Versailles
association dispensed with, t
enchant in the spacious cou
circled with its pompous ar
in the chapel, which I glance
from the court to the garden fi
and gold columns, and its ce
every rich and voluptuous col
places for a Montespan to co
in! Nor was it a common
among the bronzes and the
tains of the terrace; though
no sign of their occupation
ice-drop or two: — to watch
clined beyond the formal bu

pleasing. The walk, too, among fallen leaves to the Trianons, would have been welcome — all sentimentality apart. But, to me, the charm of every place was doubled by hearing at every step, and before every statue, their proper traditions told me, by one whose noble name would of itself, among the traces of French royalty, have imparted a *prestige* to a less polished utterance of less choice reminiscences. Nor can I ever forget the evening which I passed in one of those "gaunt mouldy houses," where every picture had its history, and every toy its tale. And yet the house held objects of a far rarer interest and value than a "wilderness" of such pictures and toys. The old nobility of France was there to be seen, taking to itself fresh life and power and means of progress, by giving to its inheritors every advantage that severe and extensive and religious culture can ensure to grace, genius, and high birth. There might be seen all that is gentlest in breeding and most generous in feeling — in its kindness most simple, in its domestic courtesies warmest: — there might be found old familiar

faces, that had looked on while vicissitude and revolution threatened to destroy the family tree, now watching it put forth fresh fruits and blossoms. It is something to know that the days are gone when royal mistresses gorged their low-bred kindred with rich estates and offices of trust; when inconvenient alliances and monstrous crimes were put upon the same level, and got rid of by the same convenient *lettre de cachet.* But it is even better to be able to point to any portion of the rank and honour of Old France, which has come forth from the fire and whirlwind necessary to the sweeping away of all those dark and gross corruptions, — purged from the old follies and inanities of its order, and qualified to take its part — not merely with the gallant sword of its ancestors, but with a sound heart and a shrewd head — in any great events which Time and Change may be preparing for its country. There was life for French morals, then, at Versailles.

Doctors are disagreed whether or not there is life for French Art in the grand historical

galleries of the palace, where every conceivable painting and daub, in which national history or anecdotage, from the days of Clovis downwards, is illustrated, have been accumulated under the auspices of Louis Philippe. Certainly, a more bewildering labyrinth than the four miles or upwards which the conscientious "seer of every thing" has to thread, it were hard to conceive. I have loitered in every chamber (and in every century); — now among the old grim monarchs of the upper galleries,— now in the superb *Galerie des Glaces*, where, before I knew it, the hat was off my head, as though I had been entering a royal presence,—now in the splendid chamber of Louis Quatorze, before the wide and lofty royal couch, canopied with the richest of velvet, and hung with the most curious of tapestry ever embroidered by the nymphs of St. Cyr:—how large the bed, how little the *prie-Dieu* chair by the bed-side! I have yawned through the monotonous cabinets walled with battles by Vandermeulen, or curious bird's-eye views of the parks and gardens of the French palaces.

Marie Antoinettes, too, without number: the loveliest of the latter in a blue dress with fur. But the series of pictures which, perhaps, amused me the most, represented the pastimes of the Prince of Condé at L'Isle Adam: — the hunting parties of His Highness; where the stag, turned out in a *pleasaunce* all terraces, canals, and staircases, only wanted a ribbon tied round his horns, and a garland by way of collar, to look perfectly *comme il faut;* — and the *petit soupers*, where, before a harpsichord, on which a table-cloth and covers, &c. were laid, a young lady in a *sacque* sate singing some ancient confection by Mondonville, in the shrillest of French voices.

From these illustrations of ancient Royalty — from these relics of days when life and amusement were sophisticated for the great and the noble to their highest possible refinement — it was a curious illustration of contrast to pass to the new gallery of battles opened by Louis Philippe. There, on gigantic canvasses, the painters of Young France have been commissioned to set forth the glories of the Empire;

nonconformists like himself have felt when about to present a new work to the world, and which, though often merely arising from physical exhaustion, are as often misconstrued to mean a consciousness of hope long deferred, and effort unrequited. He was talking of his prospects and fortunes, and his new poem, in a dismal strain, when a young lady, very simply dressed, entered and joined in the conversation. She bade the author be of good cheer, confirming her encouragement by the dearest compliment of any, recalling to him some of the noble passages of his former compositions, which *she* had understood and remembered. "I will show you," she said, "how much I have admired your 'Ahasuerus:'" and she led the way to a *studio*, where she displayed to the poet's enraptured eye a work far more priceless than the Venus of the Tribune, or the Apollo of the Vatican, — four bas-reliefs from his own poem! He was hardly to be recalled from the reverie of unspeakable delight by her saying "They are yours!" and by his reading at the foot of the composition the signature of

Marie of Orleans! This tale, whether ro
or reality, was told to me by the same p
(and almost in the same breath) as enume
the precautions taken by the Citizen Ki
avoid the assassination lying in wait for
To hear coolly discussed in polite societ
existence of a numerous body of frantic
exasperated men, utterly reckless of their
lives,— to hear recounted the changes
by Louis Philippe in his sleeping apart
every night, and in all the decorations
pieces of furniture in the chambers surroun
the one appointed for the monarch's rest,—
not the least curious illustration of the mix
of the familiar and the terrible which
salons of Paris display. It is possible tha
existence of such fearful precautions may
apocryphal as the above little Art-romanc
which a princess and a poet of Young Fr
are the interlocutors. Real or false, how
there is no place for contrasts like Paris!

"A *papier-maché* king!" Nor will
architect say "Amen" to M.——'s ener
burst of Carlism. Let his homages be ev

enthusiastically devoted to Louis the Incomparable, as a palace decorator; when he looks at the splendour springing up in every corner of the French metropolis under the auspices of Louis Philippe, — the old churches, with their renovated altars and decorations — the widened streets — the new palace-like edifices which line the Boulevards—the completion of so many of the modern king-maker's designs for the beautification of his Paris,—he will say, that, though marble and bronze are gone, the life which gave them form is not dead; and is now working, though perhaps in more perishable materials, not so much for the monarch of France as for its great and busy people!

To come into our own peculiar parish, the musician has little need to lament the King who built Versailles, and chartered French Opera, and patronised Lulli, and comforted Lalande, and had La Vallière painted as St. Cecilia, and yawned (though too courteous to La Maintenon to yawn with an open mouth) through the long, long choruses of "Athalie," at St. Cyr. At Versailles, for example, among other of the

piles of building which stand about in the streets and avenues near the Grand Place, offsets of the Château, he will be shown the one formerly appropriated to the maintenance at Versailles of such powder and periwig sportmanship as the Prince of Condé's hunting parties, which so amused me. No "barking of uncoy hounds," however, is now to be heard there: if he pass within ear-shot, he runs a good chance of having his steps arrested by the freshest and most welcome of all musical sounds—a chord of children's, or young men's, voices, in perfect tune, heard from within the building. The dog-kennel is now a normal school; and where talbots bayed and greyhounds whined, the whole assemblage of *gamins*, who would else, perchance, be peopling with their mischief the silent avenue Tumarsh describes so well, are learning, for the good of their morals as well as their voices, the strict but not ungracious lore of *Do re mi sol fa*, &c., according to the Wilhem method.

I was right in saying there was life as well as contrast at Versailles. Yes: a new musical

power has been created in France, in the working of which lies more, far more, chance of its becoming a country really devoted to the Arts, than in the royal patronage of such a king as Louis Quartorze, whose munificence implies vassalage for the people! There is to me a particular charm in the agency by which this power was introduced into the government schools of education in France. The agent was the song-writer, whose sarcastic and pathetic appeals to the street-echoes of Paris were little less formidable to the constituted authorities than the "Ça ira" of the Republicans to the last generation of Bourbons who had sat on the throne; —whose few stanzas —

> "On parlera de sa gloire
> Sur la chaume bien long-temps"—

are a burial-strain sinking far deeper into French hearts than all the more pompous laudations of Napoleon, of which more pompous bards have been delivered. I love to think that the same Beranger whose sweetest and deepest songs were those vented under the rigours of imprisonment, and who gave to the

part to promote national settlement and national enjoyment hand-in-hand — could build up as well as pull down! I love to think that every childish chord from the dog-kennels at Versailles says as much for the progress of true liberty and religion in France as the most bitter rhyme ever launched against kings and priests in the days when France would no more away with their oppressive formalities.

It was Beranger, then, who, in 1819, introduced to M. Degerando, the head of the

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to "The Artificial Comedy of the last Century," in which he treats the comic stage as an Utopia, where the fence of words and the encounter of characters touch the sympathies very remotely. "Yes, but," was the answer, "you *had* a right and a wrong; — follies and crimes have been always kept distinct in your country. With us, a new murder and a new mode are alike vehemently discussed. Our comic dramatists are truer to the universal spirit of their epochs than your Congreves and Wycherleys. I cannot look at Molière's creatures as you seem to do at your Millamants and Witwouds. They illustrated the time — its heartless love-treaties, its conventional morals, its portentous hypocrisy; and when profligacy and oppression at last stirred up the many to measure themselves against the few, had we not a Figaro? Do you not call his great soliloquy in the Fifth Act tragedy?"

[illegible]

So far and so widely has its fame spread, even here, in a short period, that to detail its leading features and plans, is needless; suffice it to say, that in France its success has been tested in schools of all kinds and of "all orders." I have heard charity children, at a tender age, singing difficult musical compositions at sight, with a certainty and clearness beyond the reach of the generality of the English profession, and totally at variance with the slightest idea of empiricism. I have seen, also, the pale, greasy, grimy operatives of Paris, when their day's work was over, thronging together eagerly, in bodies of one or two hundred, not only to receive instruction in an art which was to amuse them as innocently, at least, as the Sunday dance, on the strength of which France so long set itself forth as an Arcadia of gaiety—but also to lay up self-respect by having their capacities for learning elicited, and that in a manner which brought them on a neutral ground with those clothed with purple and fine linen. It is surely no light service done to humanity, when the great classes of society,

without displacement, are taught that they have not only senses, but spirits, in common.

I can conceive no spectacle of a more healthy interest than one of the evening meetings at the Halle aux Draps, a large building not far from the Palais Royal — open for one or other course of gratuitous instruction every evening in the week. The class I heard take its lesson there, under the tuition of an indefatigable and excellent professor — M. Hubert, who has acted as M. Wilhem's viceroy in diffusing his method through the different public institutions of Paris, amounted to two hundred men, or thereabouts. Some of them were as old as sixty, and may have heard The Marseillaise sung, and seen The Carmagnole danced round the guillotine; some of them of that mischievous age which is more mischievous, as M. Frégier and other statisticians will assure us, among the urchins of Paris than the growing boys of any other town. There was, perhaps, none of the shirtless ferocity of St. Giles's, because — though the *point-device* days of French breeding went out with the days of nobles and villains — the

roughest *canaille* of Paris can put on good behaviour in a way not to be assumed by English immobility; and wear their very rags — Robert Macaire has shown us how like gentlemen! But — the extreme of positive want and beggary excepted — there was a representative of every class, from the *décrotteur* and the Seine boatman up to the small shopkeeper: — cut-away coat and dirty blouse not thinking themselves the worse for being rubbed up against each other.

The French take kindly to such rigorous mechanical training as M. Wilhem's method demands, and as none adopting it can escape from. I have often been amused as —— has described to me, at the very identical Versailles school where we started, the children, at a word of command, spitting in platoon to clean their slates, or wiping their pens on their hair. But, whatever be his generic aptitude for discipline, a man who has all day been handling a book-binder's hammer, or a shoemaker's awl, will not go gratuitously through another hour of routine, if it be only to him a

dry piece of mere handicraft. The men I saw receiving their instruction, not only conned their task zealously while their reading lesson was going on — (the Wilhem lessons are *read* before they are sung) — but threw out their voices, in scale or interval or exercise, with such a contagious zeal as animates every party of seekers engaged in mountain climbing or any other task of acquisition or mastery; — and which seems in every effort to exclaim "*when* we get to the top!"

To believe that two hours, thus redeemed from the week, can pass over, for the ignorant and demoralised, without some amount of permanent benefit, would be surely a churlish suspiciousness. Though the miracle of Orpheus be the starting point of every itinerant lecturer, and be pushed to a fanatical application by those who imagine that Music is "meat, clothes, and fire," and, in their immoderate ecstasy at the prospect of a nation full of Catalanis and Rubinis, anticipate the return of a golden age of prosperity and refinement, — we are not therefore to turn our

backs on the old fable utterly. Whether the amount of artistic result among the people be something or nothing, it is little matter, as regards their happiness: we are to look at the amount of better feelings awakened — of coarse appetites displaced by gentler desires; — at the amount of satisfaction given to those cravings which vex man's heart, however he be clad — without the gift bringing on the fever of discontent and satiety. It was to me a reply in full to the often-repeated question of "Cui bono?" raised on all such occasions, to learn, during my last visit to Paris, in November 1840, that, night after night, while the Boulevards and the Faubourgs were filled with a population streaming hither and thither, ripe for disorder, there was no perceptible diminution of the workmen's singing classes — no recorded instance of any body turning its knowledge of "*Do re mi*" to the peculiarly good execution of "La Marseillaise," or other of the hymns of war and disorder then so largely circulated. The worn-out complaints against Music, as a demoralising art, can have

employed while making m
than while catching up the
(not tune) of the newest ro
the pleadings of a *fanatic*—
home the while he pleads—
wholly extravagant, I shall
from an author whose know
genous classes of Paris is
exempt his opinion from t
and visionary enthusiasm.

"The singing classes,"
"have a relation to the
people; and for this reason
they have been judged le
those courses of instruction w
to objects purely utilitarian
that they are not in harmony

our streets and sung in our highways. These airs, caught flying (if we may so express ourselves) by the workmen, are repeated by them in their workshops and garrets. Why forbid them access to the punctuated music and accentuated harmonies of scientific composition, when you cannot prevent their seizing and rendering, often with great taste, the airs which float through the works of our greatest masters? The municipal administration, depend upon it, is walking in a wise direction, — and let us offer no obstacle!"

Taking, then, — and that purposely, — the fruits to be expected from the diffusion of sound musical knowledge at the lowest value, I cannot but conceive that moral progress must accrue — an increase of decency — a cultivation of patience — an opening of the heart to those enjoyments which, ministering to Fancy as much as appetite, have a tendency to raise and refine the human creature. But let this be once granted, and an artistic result is at the same moment implied, — if not for the people, for a class above them. When an art is

neither loved nor sought because of Fashion but from the honest and deep satisfactions it brings in its train, — and when subordination and patient labour are submitted to for no showy ulterior purposes of exhibition, but for the sake of mastering a truth, whatever be its forms, and of finding enjoyment in its possession, a basis is created on which Genius builds solidly. Well has a French writer said, "On n'arrive à des chefs-d'œuvre que par la route de la vertu." — "L'oubli de ces principes nous a précipités dans le chaos." — If I am right in ascribing the profitless struggles of M. Berlioz to the influences of a false and demoralised state of society — where the human spirit, at once aspiring and impatient of labour, forces, at best, a spasmodic flight upwards, only to fall the deeper; — if I am right in believing that Music of the highest order, in France, labours under the mass of pretended enthusiasm which critics heap upon it, — and that creation is rendered abortive by the hectic fever of corruption in the midst

* Aimé Martin — "De l'Education des Mères de Familles."

of which it is carried on; — these unpretending operations, if ever so little they raise the tone of society — whatsoever be its order — cannot fail to exercise a counter-influence. And, technically to speak, the direction of this may, in some measure, be foreseen.

A day will come when the application of these noble bodies of trained choralists must engage public attention. At present, the vocal knowledge of France, save in theatrical music, appears to me, as far as I have any means of knowing, very meagre. Much is said about Palestrina, — little of his music is heard; and the magnificent stores of Handel are sealed, as yet, to the critics and amateurs. Any one talking of "Israel in Egypt" will be answered with a confident "Oui, Le Messie — c'est son chef-d'œuvre." I am not sure, even, that this holy work is not by some secretly classed with Mehul's "Joseph," which was brought out at "L'Opera Comique," or Rossini's "Mosé," which introduced the miracles of the Red Sea and the Desert — the "thick darkness," and the plague of "fire mingled

with rain" — to the frequenters of L'Académi Royale! A clearer light must be thrown on al these matters, — truer standards of distinctio introduced, — and researches, not into the dic tionary, but into the library of sacred compositions, instituted, in proportion as a singing people requires something to sing. Once thoroughly taught, it will become impossible tu satisfy the multitude with what is flimsy and second-rate. And when the study of those master-works shall reflect upon the creative musical genius of France, the reflection will also convey a sign, I firmly believe, of a healthier and happier state of society. If it be a dream, it is, at all events, a harmless one, to imagine, — that whereas the old Italians came to Art through Religion, the young French may come to Religion through Art; and the people humanise the nobility, in recompence for the corruption which the nobility formerly introduced and perpetuated among the people.

THE END.

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